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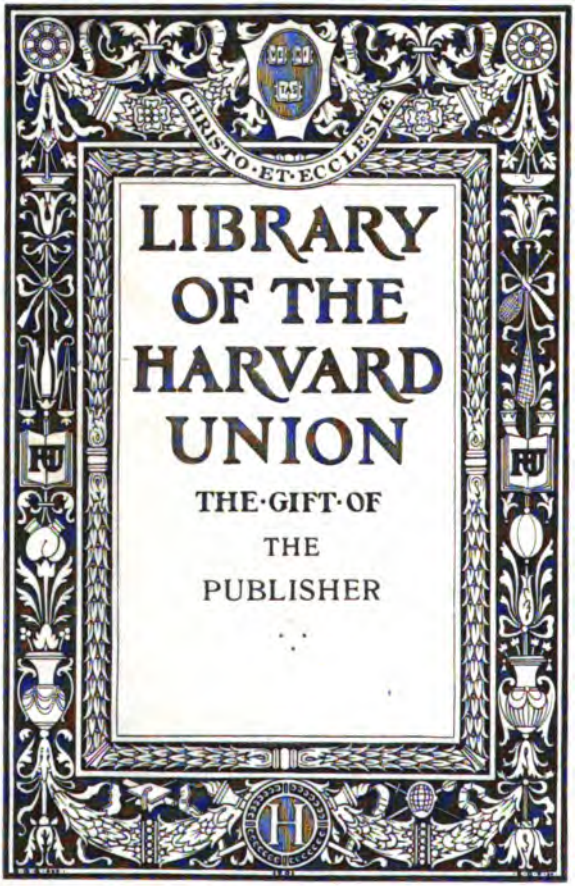

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THE COURT OF ENGLAND.

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JOHN CHURCHILL, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

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UNFAVOURABLE as was the opinion which the Prince of Orange appears to have entertained of

Lord Churchill's character, he was, nevertheless, a person of too much importance, and had laid the prince under obligations of too grave a character, to allow of his services or his interests being overlooked. Accordingly, immediately after the accession of William, he was advanced to a higher rank in his profession; he was entrusted with the office of remodelling the army, and of reducing some of the newly raised regiments; was sworn of the Privy Council, and appointed a gentleman of the bedchamber. On the 9th of April, the same year (1689), he was created Earl of Marlborough, and shortly afterward was sent to Holland, in command of the English forces intended to serve in the army of the allies under the Prince of Waldeck.

Marlborough arrived at Rotterdam in the month of May, and in August following was present at the battle of Walcourt, where the English troops distinguished themselves in a very creditable manner by their personal gallantry. It was on this occasion that the Prince of Waldeck, while commending Lord Marlborough's conduct to King William, observed, "I have seen more of the art of war in a day than some generals in many years."

William himself wrote to Marlborough shortly after the battle: "I am very happy that my troops behaved so well at Walcourt. It is to you that this advantage is principally owing. You will please, accordingly, to accept my thanks, and rest assured

that your conduct will induce me to confer on you still further marks of my esteem and friendship, on which you may always rely." On the return of the earl to England, he is said to have been received by William with an appearance of cordiality which that monarch rarely exhibited in his personal intercourse with others. However, as the king omitted to avail himself of Marlborough's services during the next campaign, either he was guilty of insincerity when he made his recent professions, or (what is rendered more probable by the earl's subsequent conduct) had reason to suspect his allegiance and good faith. Jealousy of Marlborough's increasing reputation, it was certainly not in the nature of William to feel.

During the following year, 1690, while King William was carrying on the campaign in Ireland, the great genius of Marlborough was again allowed to remain inactive in England; nor was it till the close of the campaign that he was permitted an opportunity of exercising his extraordinary talents. The city of Cork was at this period garrisoned by a body of four thousand Irish and French, and owing to the strong works which the besieged had thrown up, and the measures they had taken for its defence, the city was regarded as presenting one of the most serious obstacles that King William would have to surmount in his reduction of Ireland.

There were in England at this period a body of

five thousand troops for whose services there was no immediate demand; and, accordingly, Marlborough, having previously made himself acquainted with the military features of Cork and its vicinity, and having obtained secret information that the French fleet, which might otherwise have materially interfered with his projected proceedings, was on the point of laying up for the season, made an eager application to be placed at the head of this unemployed force; affirming, on the hazard of his reputation, that he would reduce the cities of Cork and Kinsale before the winter should have set in. In such a man as Marlborough, confidence was equivalent to success. Queen Mary (who at this period was regent of the kingdom) gave her consent to the undertaking, and the earl, on his part, made his preparations with such vigour that on the 21st of September he was able to present himself before the walls of Cork.

Shortly after he had commenced his plans, he was joined by the Duke of Wirtenburg, with a body of four thousand Danes, — a circumstance which directly threatened to rob him of the glory he had anticipated. The prince, it seems (though a junior officer in point of military rank, and at the head only of an auxiliary force), insisted, on the ground that he was a sovereign prince, that the command devolved upon him as a matter of right. Marlborough, it may easily be believed, was unwilling to yield his legitimate claims, and, conse-

quently, a misunderstanding was apprehended by their mutual followers, that might have been fatal to the cause in which they were embarked. Forgetting, however, his indignation in his care for his own interests (or, it may be, those of his country), Marlborough yielded to a disagreeable emergency, and generously proposed that the prince and himself should take the command on each alternate day. But his subsequent conduct was still more characteristic of the man. Instead of exhibiting any signs of that mortification which he must undoubtedly have felt; instead of attempting to thwart the plans or diminish the credit of his rival, he gave evidence of a magnanimity and good feeling which cannot be sufficiently extolled. When his turn came to issue the order of the day the word which he gave was "Wirtenburg." The prince was naturally gratified at the compliment, and, unwilling to be outdone in politeness, gave, in his turn, the watchword of "Marlborough." This slight incident entirely checked any unpleasant feeling of rivalry, and was succeeded, indeed, by a chivalrous competition as to him who should most assist the views and projects of the other.

"In 1692," says Dalrymple, "to the astonishment of the world, and without any apparent cause, the Earl of Marlborough was suddenly deprived of all his appointments. A visit which he received from Lord George Hamilton (who formally acquainted him that his Majesty had no further

occasion for his services) is said to have been the first intimation to him of his having encountered the king's displeasure. He was immediately removed from his post of gentleman of the bedchamber; his regiment of guards was given to Lord Colchester; his regiment of fusileers to Lord George Hamilton; and, moreover, General Talmash was selected to accompany the king during the next campaign, in the post which Marlborough should have held of lieutenant-general of foot. These steps were followed by a measure still more extraordinary: the earl was suddenly arrested by a warrant under the hand and seal of the secretary of state, and committed to the Tower."

The disgrace of the Earl of Marlborough — the mysterious arrest of a man, not only of very high rank, but who had performed the most important services for King William, and who had acted so prominent a part in the late revolution — excited an extraordinary sensation at the period. Curiosity was everywhere alive to discover the secret history of the proceeding; and, as the earl and his countess were at this period the intimate advisers of the Princess Anne; as her recent application to Parliament for an independent allowance had given the highest offence to King William; and, moreover, as Marlborough was known to be on indifferent terms both with the king's favourite, Sidney, and with his mistress, the Countess of Orkney, the immediate cause of

Marlborough's arrest was attributed to these circumstances.

Some of the passages in King James's memoirs of himself, which have reference to the earl's apostasy, are not a little curious. When Colonel Sackville, an agent of the exiled court, waited on Marlborough at this period, "the earl begged him," says James, "to assure the king of his sincere repentance, and to intercede for mercy; that he was ready to redeem his apostasy with the hazard of his utter ruin; his crimes appeared so horrid to him, that he could neither eat nor sleep, was in continual anguish, and a great deal to that purpose. He gave, without hesitation, an account of all the forces, preparations, and designs, both in England, Scotland, and Ireland. To which last kingdom, he said, the Prince of Orange intended to go himself, if the French pressed too hard on the confederates in the Low Country, that very campaign. He laid open that prince's designs both by sea and land, which, concurring with what the king had from good hands, was a great argument of Churchill's sincerity. He brought daily intelligence of incidents in the secretary's office, in relation to the Jacobites, by which they avoided many inconveniences and troubles. He desired instructions without being admitted into the king's secrets, owning that the villainies which he had committed did but too justly debar him from expecting any confidence."

In addition to this statement, may be mentioned the circumstance of the Duchess of Marlborough communicating to her sister, the Duchess of Tyrconnel (the latter a staunch Jacobite and devout Catholic), a project, which the king had privately communicated to Marlborough, of making a descent upon Dunkirk. When William next met the duke, "My lord," was the keen reproach, "you have put more confidence in your wife than I did in mine."

That a design was on foot for investing Dunkirk, which was afterward laid aside, is matter of history; and so far the charge brought against Marlborough, of having communicated the project to his wife, is supported by collateral evidence. On the other hand, however, it must be remarked that his imprudence on this occasion could in no degree have effected his removal from office, Marlborough having been dismissed as early as the month of January, 1697, and there being no mention in history of any design upon Dunkirk till as late as August following. The duchess is accused by an anonymous writer of having received a sum of money for the information which she supplied to the French court,—a charge which, resting entirely on such evidence, it is needless to say, is undeserving of credit.

The predominant vices of Marlborough were, in fact, avarice and ambition; and to his unrestrained and criminal indulgence in the temptations which

they held out to him we may attribute that despicable system of double-dealing, and, subsequently, that utter debasement of a great mind, which, however ungracious the task, it is our duty to expose. With the view of being prepared for any emergency, and of rendering his personal fortunes independent of the political changes and chances that checkered the troubled period in which he lived, he paid his court, in the most profligate manner, to men of all principles and all parties; apparently reckless, so that he attained his own object, in what degree he sacrificed the interests of his country or his own honour. The fact is clearly proved, by comparing the dates of Marlborough's own letters, that at one and the same time he was fighting the battles and ruling the councils of Queen Anne; was secretly corresponding with the Pretender at St. Germains; maintaining surreptitious communications with the Elector of Hanover, and professing a zealous regard for the interests of that family.

Unfortunately, a more tangible and disgraceful act ("an act which," it has been observed, "no attachment to James, no ill-usage which he might think he had received from King William, could justify") was at this period committed by Marlborough. The offence to which we refer is the fact of his discovering to James and the French king a project conceived by the English government, in 1694, of destroying the French ships in

the harbour of Brest. To King James he writes, on the 3d of May in that year: "It is only to-day I have heard the news I now write to you, which is, that the bomb-ketches and the twelve regiments encamped at Portsmouth, with the two regiments of marines, are destined for burning the harbour of Brest, and destroying all the men-of-war which are there. This will be a great advantage to England. But no consideration can prevent, or ever shall prevent me, from informing you of all that I believe to be for your service. Therefore, you may make your own use of this intelligence, which you may depend upon being exactly true. But I must conjure you, for your own interest, to let no one know it but the queen and the bearer of this letter. Russell sails to-morrow, with forty ships, the rest being not yet paid; but it is said that in ten days the rest of the fleet will follow; and, at the same time, the land forces. I have endeavoured to learn this some time ago from Admiral Russell, but he always denied it to me, though I am very sure that he knew the design for more than six weeks. This gives me a bad sign of this man's intentions. I shall be very well pleased to learn that this letter comes safe to your hands."

General Sackville, in enclosing this letter to the Earl of Melfont, observes: "No person but the queen and you must know from whom it comes; therefore, for the love of God, let it be

kept a secret, even from Lord Middleton." It may be here remarked that, when the English, subsequently, made the attempt on Brest, under the direction of Lord Berkeley and the Marquis of Caermarthen, it was discovered that, owing to the treacherous information supplied by Marlborough, the most vigorous measures of defence, under the direction of the celebrated engineer, Vauban, had been resorted to by the enemy. An endeavour, indeed, was made to effect a landing, but after the loss of a ship-of-war and four hundred seamen, the English soldiers were compelled to retreat in the utmost disorder, and the expedition was necessarily abandoned.

Marlborough's treasonable letter to King James, announcing the projected attack on Brest, is dated the 3d of May, 1694; and yet, in a letter dated the 22d of the very same month, it is curious to find the Duke of Shrewsbury strongly urging King William to restore him to favour. "He has been with me," writes the duke, "to offer his service, with all the expressions of duty and fidelity imaginable." And the writer adds, "I cannot but think he is capable of being very serviceable: it is, unquestionably, his interest to be faithful, and that single argument makes me not doubt it." The reply of William shows he was of a different opinion:

"July 16, 1694. — In regard to what you wrote in your last, concerning Lord Marlborough, I can

say no more than that I do not think it for the good of my service to entrust the command of my troops to him."

The professions of allegiance and unalterable devotion, which Marlborough had so freely and unequivocally expressed toward his old master, he continued, after the death of James, to offer to the orphan son of the dethroned monarch. After the accession, however, of Queen Anne, it was evidently no longer his interest to support the cause of the exiled family, and, accordingly, though with his habitual caution and duplicity he still continued secretly to profess attachment to their cause, the fact is clear, even from his own letters, that his zeal had considerably abated if not entirely ceased.

While dwelling on this subject, we may mention a circumstance which clearly evinces the high opinion formed by the exiled court of the power and influence of Marlborough. We allude to a project which was, unquestionably, entertained by the court of St. Germains, of marrying the pretended Prince of Wales to one of Marlborough's beautiful daughters, a fact sufficiently substantiated by the existence of several contemporary letters, dated in the months of March and April, 1703. This circumstance is rendered still more curious, in consequence of further evidence, which we possess, that the Whigs, nearly at the same period, proposed to unite one of his daughters to

the electoral prince, afterward George the Second, with the view of confirming Marlborough in his attachment to the Protestant succession.

After the death of Queen Mary, King William, influenced probably by motives of policy, thought proper to restore Marlborough to favour. On the 19th of June, 1698, he was readmitted to the Privy Council and restored to his military rank and employments, and, moreover, the same day, was appointed governor to the young Duke of Gloucester, the sole surviving son of the Princess Anne. When the king conferred this appointment on him, — alluding to Marlborough's extraordinary personal accomplishments, — he observed, "My lord, make him but what you are yourself, and my nephew will be all I wish to see him." This flattering compliment was followed by more substantial marks of favour. He was three times appointed one of the lords justices during the king's absences in his Dutch dominions, and, shortly before the death of William, was sent in command of a large force to Holland, besides being appointed ambassador extraordinary to the States. In what degree these marks of favour were intended to purchase the allegiance of a dangerous enemy, cannot now be ascertained. William, indeed, in the last hours of his life, is said to have recommended Marlborough to Queen Anne as the fittest person to command her armies in the event of a war. Possibly, at such a moment, his private

resentments may have been forgotten in the natural interest which he took in the welfare of his adopted country.

On the accession of Queen Anne, the influence which Marlborough and his intriguing countess had long maintained over that weak-minded princess obtained for him, not only an accumulation of honours, but, fortunately, a proper field for exercising his extraordinary talents. Within a week after the death of William, he was honoured with the Order of the Garter, and, shortly afterward, was appointed captain-general of the queen's forces in England and elsewhere. It was at this period, when the question whether war should be declared against France and Spain was under discussion in the Cabinet, that Marlborough's personal influence decided the point in favour of immediate hostilities, and, accordingly, war was formally declared on the 4th of May, 1702.

The first campaign, consequent on these proceedings, was commenced under the direction of the Earl of Athlone, a man whose personal courage and generosity of mind far exceeded either his judgment or his military capacity. Under the auspices of this general, affairs not only presented an indifferent aspect, but when Marlborough, shortly afterward, superseded him in the direction of the campaign, he had the mortification to find that a recent and very precipitate retreat, under the walls of Nimeguen, had cooled the ardour of

the British troops, and that he was placed in the difficult and unenviable position of commanding a discomfited and disheartened army. In addition to this unfavourable circumstance, he could reckon but sixty thousand men under his command, while the French army was in the field, under the Duke of Burgundy, with an apparently overwhelming force. Difficulties, however, such as these served only to stimulate his insatiate appetite for fame; his genius expanded with the emergency, and, before the close of the campaign, besides other important successes, the town and citadel of Liège had fallen into the hands of the English.

The States of Holland acknowledged the early services of Marlborough in a manner which must have been highly gratifying to his pride. Athlone, also, who for some time had continued nominally to share with him the command of the army (forgetting the disagreeable contrast which the successes of Marlborough presented to his own discomfiture), replied to the States, on their conferring on him a share of the credit of the campaign, that their thanks were entirely due to the Earl of Marlborough, whose plans, he generously admitted, he had always pertinaciously opposed.

In England, especially, Marlborough had little reason to complain that his services were not appreciated. A day of public thanksgiving was appointed for the success of the British arms, on which occasion the queen proceeded in state to St.

Paul's. On the earl's return to London he was waited upon by a committee of the House of Commons, who thanked him for the services he had conferred on the country; immediately afterward (on the 14th of December, 1702) he was created Marquis of Blandford and Duke of Marlborough; and, moreover, had a pension conferred on him, of five thousand a year, out of the revenues of the post-office.

The wealth, if not the honours, lavished upon the duke appears to have been much cavilled at by his contemporaries. Evelyn says: "After the excess of honour conferred on the Earl of Marlborough, by making him a Knight of the Garter and a duke, for the success of but one campaign, that he should desire £5,000 a year to be settled on him by Parliament out of the post-office, was thought a bold and unadvised request, as he had, besides his own considerable estate, above £30,000 a year in places and employments, with £59,000 at interest." In addition to the favours heaped on the Marlborough family at this period, the queen conferred a pension on the duchess out of the civil list of £2,000 a year. This offer was, with apparent magnanimity, declined. After her disgrace, however, the duchess, with, of course, the approval of her husband, claimed and received the whole arrears of the pension for the preceding nine years.

The gratification which a vast accession of hon-

ours must have afforded to so ambitious a mind as that of the Duke of Marlborough was damped in the hour of his exultation by a family affliction of the severest kind. He was on the eve of returning to Holland to commence a fresh campaign, when, on the 20th of February, 1703, he lost his only son, the Marquis of Blandford, who died at Cambridge at the age of eighteen. Burnet styles him "a graceful person and a very promising youth." Archdeacon Coxe awards him several pages of encomium; and if the frigid poetical praises of Congreve and Fenton are to be trusted, he was worthy of all esteem when he was living, and deserved to be lamented in better verses when he was dead.

Marlborough, however, was a man not likely to be turned aside from the pursuit of his public engagements, or his private interests, by any domestic misfortune, however severe. Accordingly, as soon as he could with decency return to his professional duties, he repaired to Holland, and on the 6th of March presented himself before the States General at The Hague. The campaign was almost immediately opened; and, though distinguished by no action of extraordinary lustre, yet, by the masterly manner in which Marlborough conducted its various details, he added not a little to his military reputation, and at the close of the year returned to England to receive fresh favours from his sovereign and his countrymen.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN CHURCHILL, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

Resumption of the Campaign against France — Marlborough Joins Prince Eugene — Battle of Blenheim — Marlborough's Letter to the Duchess on the Occasion — Anecdotes — Fresh Honours and Emoluments Heaped on the Duke — Addison's Poem of "The Campaign" — Characteristic Anecdotes of Marlborough by Lord Dartmouth and Evelyn — His Narrow Escapes at the Battle of Ramillies — Great Moral Effects Produced by the Battle — Marlborough's Reckless Daring at the Siege of Ostend — He Returns to London, and Again Receives the Thanks of Parliament — Battle of Oudenard — The House of Commons Orders the Speaker to Transmit Their Thanks to Marlborough Abroad — Sanguinary Battle of Malplaquet — Description of the French Army — Dreadful Havoc among the English Troops — Decline of Marlborough's Political Influence with Queen Anne — Curious Unpublished Letters Addressed by Him to Lord Coningsby — Anne's Determination to Break with the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough — Singular Interview between Her and the Duchess — The Duke's Son-in-law Superseded in His Office of Secretary of State — Expulsion of the Whigs from Office — Marlborough's Tenacity of Place — Extracts from His Correspondence at This Period — His Humiliating Treatment by the Tories — Anecdote Related by Lord Dartmouth — Letters from the Duke to Lord Coningsby — The Duchess of Marlborough Resigns All Her Offices in the Royal Household.

ALTHOUGH it is foreign to the purpose of this work to follow the Duke of Marlborough with any minuteness through the various details of his mili-

tary career, it is, nevertheless, impossible to pass over in total silence the more prominent features of his professional history. It may be mentioned, therefore, that the following year (1704) the duke joined his forces to those of Prince Eugene, and, after an extraordinary march of fifty days (in which he proceeded from the frontiers of Holland to the banks of the Danube), obtained in July the victory of Shellenberg, and on the 13th of August won the celebrated battle of Blenheim. The army of the Allies amounted on the latter occasion to about fifty-two thousand men, the forces of the French and Bavarians to about sixty thousand. On the night preceding the battle the duke received the sacrament in his tent, and on the following morning divine service was performed at the head of each regiment. At the close of this solemn ceremony the conflict commenced, and, after a doubtful and sanguinary contest of some hours, victory decided in favour of the Allies. This memorable engagement, according to Marlborough's own account, cost the French and Bavarians the immense loss of forty thousand men, of whom thirteen thousand seem to have been taken prisoners. Among these there were, according to Marlborough's further account, as many as fifteen hundred officers, and the greatest number of their generals, of whom the most conspicuous was the gallant Marshal Tallard, who commanded the enemy's right wing.

"Unfortunate Tallard! oh, who can name
The pangs of rage, of sorrow, and of shame,
That with mixed tumult in thy bosom swelled,
When first thou saw'st thy bravest troops repelled;
Thine only son pierced with a deadly wound,
Choked in his blood, and gasping on the ground;
Thyself in bondage by the victor kept!
The chief, the father, and the captive wept.
The English muse is touched with generous woe,
And in th' unhappy man forgets the foe."

The original document, wherein Marlborough announced the victory of Blenheim, — the only communication on the subject which he despatched to England at the time, — is, for many reasons, obviously curious. It was addressed to his duchess, for the information of Queen Anne; was scribbled on a slip of paper torn from his pocket-book; and, as he himself informs us in one of his subsequent letters, was written before "the battle was quite done."

"August 13, 1704.

"I have not time to say more, but to beg you will give my duty to the queen, and let her know her army has had a glorious victory. M. Tallard and two other generals are in my coach, and I am following the rest. The bearer, my aide-de-camp, Colonel Park, will give her an account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two more at large.

"MARLBOROUGH."

A sister of the celebrated Bishop Burnet, in congratulating the Duchess of Marlborough on the recent victory, observes: "The bishop said he could not sleep, his heart was so charged with joy; he desires your Grace would carefully lay up that little letter as a relic that cannot be valued enough." This "little letter" is still preserved among the treasures of Blenheim, and is not rendered the less remarkable from its being endorsed with a tavern bill of the Duke of Marlborough.

It appears by a journal kept by the duke's chaplain, Mr. Hare, that after the battle of Blenheim Marlborough selected as his headquarters a small water-mill near Hochstadt, a place, it may be remarked, which at one time gave the name to the victory. He subsequently paid a visit to his prisoner, Marshal Tallard, at the quarters of the Prince of Hesse, of which Hare gives rather a graphic account. Marlborough, he says, made the marshal an offer of his own equipage and quarters, which the other very thankfully declined. At the same time, Hare describes the French generals as crowding about the duke, expressing their admiration of his graceful person, and of his tender and generous disposition.

The victory of Blenheim — the most splendid gained by the English over their hereditary enemies since the battle of Agincourt — raised the military reputation of the duke to the highest pitch. Shortly before this period he had been created a

prince of the empire, while in England the most unbounded proofs, both of popular and royal favour, awaited his triumphant return. On his arrival in London, he received the solemn thanks of both Houses of Parliament; the city of London honoured him with a public feast; and the Commons addressed the queen to confer on him some extraordinary mark of distinction, such as should demonstrate the high sense which they entertained of the services of the victor, and for ever perpetuate the memory of his exploit. Agreeably with this recommendation, Marlborough was granted the Honour of Woodstock and the Hundred of Wotton, which by act of Parliament were vested in him and his heirs for ever. The tenure, however, of this splendid grant was accompanied by a particular clause that, on the 2d of August, every year, the duke and his heirs should transmit a standard, ornamented with three fleurs-de-lys, to the castle of Windsor. The manor of Strathfieldsaye, conferred in our own time, is still held by a similar tenure; and it may be mentioned that these interesting memorials of Blenheim and Waterloo now hang side by side in Windsor Castle, in a small closet, in which Queen Anne was seated when the news of the former battle was announced to her.

The duke, on his return to his native country, was accompanied by spoils which might have done honour to a Roman triumph. Among his pris-

oners were the "unfortunate Tallard," and twenty-six other officers of rank; among his trophies, one hundred and twenty-one standards and one hundred and seventy-nine colours, the whole of which, by the queen's desire, were suspended in Westminster Hall. Medals were struck and poems written in his honour; among the latter of which Philips's poem of "Blenheim," Prior's poetical epistle to Boileau, and Addison's "Campaign" are the most celebrated. With regard to the latter poem, which Wharton happily styles "a Gazette in rhyme," the selection of the opening motto from Claudian will be considered by many persons as more felicitous than the poem itself:

> "... Rheni pacator et Istri
> Omnis in hoc uno variis discordia cessit
> Ordinibus; lætatur eques, plauditque senator,
> Votaque patricio certant plebeia favori."
> — *Claud. de Laud. Stilic.* Lib. Tert.

After the battle of Blenheim, the duke, for political reasons, is said to have affected an undue degree of state and magnificence. "He assumed," says Lord Dartmouth, "the title of Highness abroad, which was given him by all the officers in the army; and he affected eating alone, which the Duke of Montagu (who had married one of his daughters) was to countenance by standing at his meals. Nobody in England would allow of such distinctions; but everybody thought

his aim was to bring us by degrees to something higher." It must not be presumed, however, that this affectation of increased splendour was accompanied by anything like the vulgar arrogance of a fortunate upstart. On the contrary, the manners of Marlborough, after his great victory, appear to have been as eminently distinguished for high-bred urbanity and unaffected frankness as when he was merely the successful courtier under King James, or the neglected statesman under King William. Evelyn, who was accidentally thrown into his company shortly after the battle of Blenheim, has left us a pleasing account of their interview. "I went," he says, "to wait on my lord treasurer, where was the victorious Duke of Marlborough, who came to me and took me by the hand with extraordinary familiarity and civility, as formerly he was used to do, without any alteration of his good nature. He had a most rich George in a sardonyx set with diamonds of very great value; for the rest, very plain. I had not seen him for some years, and believed he might have forgotten me."

The campaign of 1705, though conducted by the duke with his usual vigour and genius, and though attended, as usual, with success, presents but few incidents worthy of record. The campaign, however, of the following year was distinguished by the celebrated battle of Ramillies, which took place on Whit-Sunday, the 12th of May, 1706. During the action, the duke's life was twice in the

The Battle of Ramillies.

Photo-etching after the painting by Godefroy.

utmost danger. On the first occasion, having been singled out by a party of the enemy, and happening, unfortunately, as he was leaping a ditch, to fall from his horse, he would, unquestionably, have been either killed or taken prisoner, had not some of the confederate infantry come opportunely to his aid. His second escape was from a cannon-ball, which actually carried off the head of Colonel Bingfield, his gentleman of the horse, as he was holding the stirrup for the duke to remount. "Poor Bingfield!" he writes to the duchess on the evening of the battle, "while holding my stirrup for me, and helping me on horseback, was killed. I am told that he leaves his wife and mother in a poor condition. I can't write to any of my children, so you will let them know I am well, and that I desire they will thank God for preserving me." Voluminous as is his correspondence, the act of writing never appears to have been a pleasing occupation to the duke, and on this, as on almost every other occasion, after having been engaged in action, he complains that a violent headache renders writing extremely uneasy to him. Generally speaking, the noise and excitement of a battle appear to have affected his health for several days.

Considering the important results of the battle of Ramillies, the action itself was one of the briefest on record. It lasted, according to some authorities, about two hours; according to others, only

half an hour, when the French commenced an irregular and precipitate retreat. In this decisive engagement, the loss of the enemy amounted to about six thousand killed, and as many taken prisoners. Among the former were the Princes of Soubise and Rohan, and a son of Marshal Tallard, who was mortally wounded. The whole of the enemy's cannon, also, consisting of fifty pieces, several kettle-drums, and eighty standards and colours fell into the hands of the English. The moral effect produced by this victory was of still greater importance. Within a short period, Louvaine, Brussels, Mechlin, Ghent, Bruges, and Antwerp submitted, under the auspices of Marlborough, to the Spanish monarch, Charles the Third; and, within a fortnight, the whole of Brabant, and the Marquisate of the Holy Empire, also acknowledged his sway. On the 28th of June, the trenches were opened before the town of Ostend, and on the 3d of July it surrendered. During the course of hostilities, Queen Anne had addressed a letter to the duke, in her own handwriting, in which her sole command was, "Be careful of yourself!" This injunction, however, seems to have been signally disregarded by Marlborough, as, during the siege of Ostend, we find him, for more than an hour, recklessly exposing his life in the trenches, under one of the hottest fires which the oldest soldier ever remembered to have witnessed.

It may be remarked that the strong fortress of Menin — the masterpiece of Marshal Vauban — surrendered after a siege of eighteen days, and before the middle of September both Dendermonde and Aeth fell into Marlborough's hands.

On the 18th of November the duke arrived in London to gather fresh honours, and, what was dearer to him, additional wealth. A day of thanksgiving was appointed, on which the queen went in procession to St. Paul's; the banners taken at Ramillies were carried in state through the city, in order to be suspended in Guildhall; the city of London again invited him to a public dinner; and an emulation took place between the Houses of Lords and Commons which could do most honour to the hero of the age. Both Houses returned him their solemn thanks; the Lords solicited the queen to permit his honours, and the national gift of Blenheim, to descend in the female line; and the Commons expressed their anxiety to make a still more honourable provision for the maintenance of his dignity. Agreeably with a recommendation which they made to the queen to this effect, an additional pension of five thousand a year was settled out of the revenues of the post-office on the duke.

The campaign of 1707 was marked by no event of particular interest, if we except the honours and compliments paid him by foreign potentates. In a letter dated "The King of Sweden's Quarters,

16th of April, 1707," Marlborough writes to his duchess, "The King of Poland has this evening sent a gentlemen to make me compliments, and to let me know that he is come to Leipsic on purpose to speak to me, so that I am to go to him to-morrow, which will occasion my staying one day longer here than I intended." Again he writes, at the end of the same month: "This journey has given me the advantage of seeing four kings,[1] three of which I had never seen; they seem to be all very different in their kinds; if I was obliged to make a choice, it should be the youngest, which is the King of Sweden," and he concludes this last letter: "When I left the court of Sweden, I was given to understand that the king intended his picture should be at The Hague for me, before the end of the campaign. The King of Prussia forced a ring upon me, which is said to be worth a thousand pounds."

The campaign of the following year was distinguished by the battle of Oudenard, fought on the 30th of June, 1708. In this action the French left four thousand men dead on the field; seven thousand more were taken prisoners, and about one hundred standards and colours fell into the hands of the duke. In consequence of this success, the town and citadel of Lisle shortly afterward capitulated, and the towns of Ghent and

[1] The King of Sweden, the King of Prussia, and the two Kings of Poland.

Bruges, as well as some other important places, surrendered to the Allies. The Lords and Commons again returned him their thanks; the latter paying him an unusual, if not unprecedented compliment, by ordering their Speaker to transmit their thanks to him abroad.

The event which chiefly distinguished the following campaign was the battle of Malplaquet, fought on the 31st of August, 1709, on which occasion the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene counted under their command a magnificent army of ninety-three thousand men, supported by 101 pieces of cannon and four mortars. According to the most trustworthy accounts, the French army, under Villars, was of nearly equal force; superior, indeed, in cavalry to the Allies, but not so well provided in artillery. On the other hand, France could reckon among her ranks the flower of her chivalry and her noblest troops. There were comprised in this, the most splendid army which she had ever brought into the field, the Gardes du Corps, the Mousquetaires, the light horse, horse grenadiers, and Gens d'Armes. Among the cavalry of the line were the carabineers, and among the infantry the French and Swiss guards, the Bavarian and Cologne guards, and the Irish brigade. These troops, the boasted flower of the French army, were commanded by the most experienced generals of the time, and there were present in the battle no fewer than twelve of the

French nobility, who afterward became marshals of France.

At the celebrated and sanguinary battle of Malplaquet, the French offered a noble resistance, and displayed a daring gallantry, such as might have been expected from such men, and to which Marlborough himself was among the first to pay homage. Such was the fury of each repeated encounter, and such the determination to vanquish, that no quarter was given, but few colours were captured, and, with the exception of the wounded, five hundred prisoners only fell into the hands of the Allies. The French, indeed, retreated; but it was not till they had occasioned a frightful havoc in the ranks of their opponents, which was afterward found to have greatly exceeded their own loss. They left behind them, it is true, as many as fourteen thousand men, killed and wounded, but the casualties in the allied army seem to have exceeded that number by nearly six thousand men. Marlborough himself, accustomed as he was to the horrors of war, seems to have been sensibly affected by the extent of the slaughter. In two brief notes, which he wrote on the field of Malplaquet, he styles the engagement, on one occasion, a "bloody," and on the other occasion a "murdering" battle. His correspondence, moreover, discovers no trace of that inward satisfaction which usually characterises his announcements of any brilliant success.

The victory of Malplaquet was, as usual, followed by thanksgivings to Providence, and by addresses and congratulations to the duke; indeed, a nation, who had already expended all their gratitude and their resources in doing honour to their favourite and benefactor, had now few favours more substantial to confer. With this great battle we must close our very cursory notice of the military career of the Duke of Marlborough, merely remarking that the two last campaigns which it was his fortune to conduct, — those of 1710 and 1711, — though distinguished by no event of unusual splendour, yet in no degree diminish the high military reputation which he had so deservedly obtained.

Splendid, however, as had been the Duke of Marlborough's career; gratifying as must have been the conviction to him, that to his own extraordinary exertions and talents he was mainly indebted for his exaltation from the humble rank of a page to the very pinnacle of human greatness, he was, nevertheless, destined to experience the insecurity of a position which, but a few years before, no exertions of his enemies, no unfavourable combination of events, appeared likely to change or undermine. As the hold which his beautiful duchess had established in the affections of Queen Anne had proved the original stepping-stone to his greatness, so was her decline in the queen's favour destined to be the cause of his fall.

As early as 1707, the appearance of the celebrated Mrs. Masham at court, and her increasing influence with the queen, had given animation to dormant factions, and excited the jealousy and fears of the Whigs. By degrees, it became clear that the queen listened secretly to the arguments of the Tories; Harley, through his tool and associate, Mrs. Masham, was known to have instilled his poison into her Majesty's private ear; opportunity was given to the crafty and insinuating St. John to exercise his wily genius; and, in the end, the great Marlborough had the mortification to discover that French intrigues were gaining force in England, and that his own star was no longer to be the brightest in the hemisphere. In addition to these circumstances, the duke's conduct and motives began to be fiercely attacked by the party writers of the period; the great battle of Malplaquet was spoken of as a rash and imprudent attack; the most aggravated accounts of the killed and wounded were carefully circulated; and, indeed, Harley, in his communications with the queen, not only spoke of the battle as "wanton carnage," but even threw out an infamous hint that Marlborough had purposely sacrificed the lives of his officers, with the view of profiting by the sale of their commissions.[1] Moreover, the

[1] The same charge was brought against the Duke of Marlborough by Earl Poulett in the House of Lords. "A certain general," he said, "had led his troops to be slaughtered, and had

duke's insatiable love of money was openly harped upon by his enemies, and it was confidently and cruelly insisted that he was prolonging a tedious and unprofitable war for the sole purpose of filling his own coffers.

Although the queen's altered feelings toward the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough must long have been sufficiently evident to both, yet it was not till the following year that she showed her fixed determination to rid herself entirely of her former favourites. This delay in putting her intentions in practice was, in a great degree, owing to the natural timidity and indecision of her character. She was quite as unwilling to incur the danger of exasperating so powerful a subject as the Duke of Marlborough as to draw down upon herself the charge of ingratitude, by disgracing a man whose services had been so eminent, and whose exploits were still so fresh in the memory of his countrymen.

At length the queen seized an opportunity of plainly, though cautiously, declaring her sentiments to the world. A regiment having become vacant by the death of the Earl of Essex, she wrote to the Duke of Marlborough, expressing

caused a great number of officers to be knocked on the head, in a battle or against stone walls, in order that he might dispose of their commissions." Marlborough challenged the foolish braggart, and a duel was only prevented by the interference of the secretary of state.

her wish that he would confer the command on Colonel Hill, a brother of Mrs. Masham. The duke instantly waited upon the queen, and represented to her, in very proper terms, how invidious a distinction it would be to advance a young and inexperienced officer over the heads of a number of veterans, whose long and faithful services gave them superior claims. He further observed that, under such peculiar circumstances, the promotion of the brother of the greatest enemy, both of his family and of himself, would be regarded in no other light by the world than as a total withdrawal from him of her Majesty's confidence and regard. To this expostulation the queen merely replied that he would do well to consult his friends, — a piece of advice which the duke took in its proper spirit, and immediately returned to his seat at Windsor in disgust.

To the remonstrances, indeed, of the Earl of Godolphin, and others of Marlborough's friends, the queen persisted in affirming that, so far from the duke having forfeited her favours, she retained all her former feelings of kindness toward him. The Duchess of Marlborough, at the same period, — on pretence of vindicating her past conduct, though in reality to make a last effort to revive the queen's tenderness, — demanded and was permitted an interview with her royal mistress. At this strange meeting, the duchess so far mastered her haughty humour as to resort to the humblest

supplications and even to tears. Her mortification, however, must have been complete, when the queen, preserving the most studied coldness of manner, merely retorted on her the duchess's own words, in a letter which she had recently addressed to her, "You desired no answer, and you shall have none." In addition to this circumstance, the duke's unusual absence on the next council day was allowed to pass wholly unnoticed by the queen.

Circumstances, however, subsequently occurred, which for a time respited the entire disgrace of Marlborough. A popular clamour having been raised in consequence of the reports of his dismissal, the queen deemed it inexpedient to insist any longer upon Hill's appointment, and accordingly the Earl of Godolphin was ordered to convey the queen's commands to the duke to return instantly to London, with the understanding that he should dispose of the vacant regiment as he pleased. The disgrace of the Whigs, however (which was certain to be the prelude to that of Marlborough), was inevitably fixed. With the view of ascertaining the state of public feeling, and of preparing the way for more important changes, the Duke of Shrewsbury, who had latterly voted with the Tories, was appointed to the post of lord chamberlain, and Marlborough's son-in-law, the Earl of Sunderland, was superseded in his office of secretary of state. Thus far only, at

this particular juncture, did the queen's timidity permit her to proceed. As the nation, however, not only submitted to, but approved of these measures, more important alterations in the Cabinet were determined upon; and, accordingly, in the month of August, 1710, was quietly effected that great political change, which effectually drove the Whigs from office, and transferred to Harley and the Tories the direction of affairs.

During the period that these latter events were passing, the Duke of Marlborough was engaged in foreign service. He was now the only Whig left in office, and, consequently, on his return to London at the close of the year, his position, for many reasons, was rendered no less mortifying to himself than it seems to have been embarrassing to the queen. He arrived in England in the month of December, and succeeded in obtaining a private audience with the queen. The interview in question lasted only half an hour. Anne, on this occasion, told him plainly that he must no longer expect the thanks of Parliament as formerly, at the same time intimating that, as long as he retained the command of the army, she trusted he would live on good terms with her ministers. Whether Marlborough was unwilling to resign his lucrative employments, or whether he felt it incumbent upon him to sacrifice his private resentments to the interests of his country, certain it is that he continued to cling to office, notwithstanding the per-

sonal hostility of the queen, and that his enemies had the direction of affairs. In the addresses from Parliament to the throne all notice was omitted of his recent successes; and though an attempt was made in the House of Lords to obtain for him the thanks of that House, the proposal met with no encouragement.

From the period when his friends were deprived of power, till the day arrived when he was himself a disgraced man, a more mortifying position than that of the great Marlborough can scarcely be conceived. It requires us, indeed, to believe him as perfect a patriot as unquestionably he was a great hero, before we can conscientiously attribute his retention of office to a mere sense of duty, or assign his endurance of insult, injury, and a thousand cowardly provocations, merely to his determination to stand by his country in spite of herself. In the words of his biographer, Coxe, "He stood alone, the mark of political enmity, envy, and faction." His letters at the period, more especially such as were written during his last campaign, discover how humiliating he found his position, and, in turns, how indignant and how despondent were his thoughts. At one time, we find him hesitating to adopt some military manœuvre, lest a partial failure should be turned by his enemies to his disadvantage. In another letter he expresses his conviction that even his private communications will be read by Harley;

and, again, in speaking of the "harsh return" which his services have met with from his own countrymen, he says that if anything could afford him pleasure in his present mortifying position, it would be the "kind concern which all the foreigners show him" in his distress. To the duchess he writes at this period: "You must not flatter yourself; but expect everything that can be disagreeable personally to yourself; for there is no barbarity but what you and I must expect."

But the most humiliating treatment which Marlborough had to encounter was the dictatorial and almost insulting language addressed to him by Harley and St. John, on his consenting to continue in office under their administration. It appears by one of St. John's letters, that the duke was told plainly by his new colleagues that he must "abandon the Whigs, his new friends, and take up with his old friends, the Tories; that he must engage heartily in their interests; that he must no longer leave his country a sacrifice to rapine and faction; and also that he would be required to restrain the rage and fury of his wife." Again, St. John writes to his confidential agent, Drummond, on the 23d of January, 1711: "He has been told by the Duke of Shrewsbury, by Mr. Harley, and by your humble servant, that since the queen agrees to his commanding the army, it is our duty, and in the highest degree our interest, to support him, if possible, better than he ever yet

was, and that he may depend upon this. He has seen, in other instances, that we were able to see and pursue that which was right, why should he think us capable of judging on this occasion so wrong? He was told at first that he had nothing to reproach us with; that his wife, my Lord Godolphin, and himself, had thrown the queen's favour away, and that he ought not to be angry if other people had taken it up. He was told that his true interest consisted in getting rid of his wife, who was grown to be irreconcilable with the queen, as soon as he could, and with the best grace which he could. He has been told that he must draw a line between all that is past, and all that is to come, and that he must begin entirely upon a new foot." "We shall do what we can," adds Bolingbroke, "to support him in the command of the army, without betraying our mistress, and, unless he is infatuated, he will help us in this design; for you must know that the moment he leaves the service, and loses the protection of the court, such scenes will open as no victories can varnish over." The meaning of this extraordinary threat we shall presently perceive.

Had the Duke of Marlborough been at once expelled from power, Anne, who was as little distinguished for her sense of gratitude as for the softness of her heart, would have readily forgotten, in the society of her parasites and secret advisers, her long friendship for the duke, and the

splendid services which he had performed in her cause. But the fact that Marlborough still retained the command of the army — inasmuch as it led to more than one personal interview between the queen and the duke — could not fail in some degree to revive old associations, and to render their intercourse disagreeable and embarrassing.

"Upon the Duke of Marlborough's coming home," says Lord Dartmouth, "I asked the queen how she would have her servants live with him. She said that would depend upon his behaviour to her. I told her I was sure that would be all submission, since other means proved ineffectual, and asked her if she could stand that. She said, from him she could. After he had been with her, she told me it was just as I said, only lower than it was possible to imagine. When I went to wait upon him he received me with seeming kindness and civility, and put me in mind of my relation, which I had not heard of for many years before, and hoped I would do him good offices to the queen, who, he knew, had entire confidence in me, which he was sincerely glad of. He complained of his wife, who, he said, acted strangely, but there was no help for that; and a man must bear a good deal to be quiet at home. He spoke very severely of the Duke of Argyle, who was never to be satisfied or obliged; and told me, however the world

went, I should come off well, for I had many friends and few enemies, and he did not despair of laughing heartily with me one day at all these hurlyburlies."

The following hitherto unpublished letters from the Duke of Marlborough, as showing the state of his feelings at this juncture, will probably be read with interest.

"Wednesday night, January 16, 1711.

"My Lord:—I have received the favour of yours written this morning. I was in hopes to have seen you this last Sunday morning, having given orders for the letting you up, though I saw no company, having a great mind to have acquainted you at large with the mortifications which had made me take the resolution of coming to this place. Mr. Manyring being with me as I went into my coach, I desired him to acquaint you with what I had told him; what I would say further is, that this is the time or never for the getting rid of what you have so often thought reasonable; I desire you will every day advise with Craggs, so as that the best measures may be taken for the removing Mrs. M. I think it is best for me to continue here till I see what part everybody will take. The paper you mention, or any other thing you care to write, will be sent safe to me every day, if you will give it to my porter, I having taken care of having my letters come

neither by the post nor coaches, so that you may write freely. I am most faithfully Yours.

"*For the R^t Hon^ble the Lord Coningsby.*"

"27 November, 1711.

"My Lord:—I return you many thanks for your obliging letter of the 21st instant, as I must now likewise do for that of the 15th past, which came to hand on my way homewardes. I cannot pretend to advise you in what you desire of me; your own inclinations and business must govern you in that point, and tho you may be assured, without a compliment, I should be extreame glad to see you, yet I am too much your friend, to cal you, for my own satisfaction, from a retirement I have been longing for myself for some time past. When I waited on the queen, I assured Her Ma^ty of my ready inclination to continue in Her service with the same zeal and affection I have hetherto showen, notwithstanding the many hardships that have been put upon me; however, I do not concern myself in anything that is now doing, nor have I appeared at either Councel or Cabinet. I am with great truth, Yours."

It was at this period that the Duchess of Marlborough found it, at length, incumbent upon her to resign her various offices in the royal household; and, accordingly, the duke, however unwillingly, carried the gold key to the queen, and at

the same time tendered the surrender of all his wife's employments. The duchess, it may be remarked, held at one and the same time the offices of groom of the stole, mistress of the robes, and keeper of the privy purse. The two former appointments, immediately on her dismissal, were conferred on the Duchess of Somerset; the latter on Mrs. Masham. Up to this period, the house of Marlborough may be said to have constituted the court of Queen Anne.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN CHURCHILL, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

Marlborough's Downfall Determined on by His Enemies — He Is Attacked in the House of Lords, and Defends Himself with Pathos and Eloquence — He Is Accused of Bribery, and Dismissed from All His Employments — King of Prussia's Remark on Hearing of the Duke's Disgrace — Extract from Burnet — Charge of Peculation Brought against the Duke — His Explanation of the Affair — Attorney-General Ordered to Prosecute Him — He Is Constantly Attacked by the Hireling Scribblers and Pamphleteers of the Day — He Suddenly Quits England for Ostend — Probable Causes of His Departure — Erasmus Lewis's Statement of the Duke's Intrigues with the French Court in 1706 — Extract from a Letter of Louis the Fourteenth to the Marquis de Torcy — Private Interview between the Duke and the Earl of Oxford — Anecdote Related by Dalrymple — Extract from the Biographia Britannica — Curious Anecdote of the Duke and Lord Harley — Marlborough Makes Overtures to the Tory Ministry during His Absence in France — His Intimacy with Lord Bolingbroke — His Letter to the Duchess of Berwick — He Renews His Professions of Attachment to the Exiled Court — Extract from Swift's Letters to Stella — The Duke's Double Dealing with the Elector of Hanover and the Pretender — Bolingbroke's Character of Marlborough.

IF the duke's return to London, at the close of the former campaign, had been attended with mortifying and embarrassing circumstances, his appear-

ance in the capital, on the cessation of hostilities in 1711, was even more humiliating. His military career was now at an end, — his last battle had been fought, — and, if not a ruined, he was at least a disgraced and fallen man. Whatever might have been his public faults or his private failings, a man whose career had been so glorious, whose services for his country had been so unparalleled, might have expected, after a life of labour and glory, a somewhat better reception than now awaited him.

On the 17th of November the duke arrived in England. The night on which he approached London was the anniversary of the inauguration of Queen Elizabeth, and as the populace were occupied in their usual rejoicings, the duke, in order to avoid publicity, passed the first night of his return at Greenwich. The next day he waited upon the queen, and exchanged visits of ceremony with her ministers. Notwithstanding, however, these and other deceptive evidences of returning cordiality and good-will, the downfall of Marlborough was fully determined upon by his enemies; and the mode of attack was no sooner settled than it was put in practice. The first blow was struck in the House of Lords, where Marlborough was openly accused of having protracted the war to suit his private ends. He defended himself from the charge, in a speech which was as spirited as it was pathetic; his eloquence, more-

over, being rendered the more effective, in consequence of the queen — to whose conviction of his innocence he solemnly appealed — being present, though in a private capacity, in the House. "I can declare," he said, "with a good conscience, in the presence of her Majesty, of this illustrious assembly, and of God himself, who is infinitely superior to all the powers of the earth, and before whom, by the ordinary course of nature, I shall soon appear, to render an account of my actions, that I was very desirous of a safe, honourable, and lasting peace, and was always very far from prolonging the war for my own private advantage, as several libels and discourses have most falsely insinuated; my great age, and my numerous fatigues in war, make me ardently wish for the power to enjoy a quiet repose, in order to think of eternity."

Whether the accusation against the duke was true or false, certainly such an appeal from such a man would, with any woman less cold and less insensible than Queen Anne, have produced the desired effect.

Unfortunately for the Duke of Marlborough, his public conduct presented other and more tangible points of attack, of which his enemies did not scruple to avail themselves. In addition to the previous charge of having criminally protracted the war, an offence of a graver, or at least of a more disgraceful character, was imputed to him.

A commission, it seems, had been appointed to examine into the public accounts, who reported, among other evidences of corruption and abuse, that there was full proof of the Duke of Marlborough having received, in the shape of a bribe, an annual present of five or six thousand pounds from the contractors of bread for the army. The evidences of the duke's guilt having been laid before the queen in council, she came to the strong determination of dismissing him forthwith from all his employments. Her final resolution the queen announced to the duke in a letter in her own handwriting. Marlborough returned a respectful letter, in which he ineffectually attempted to vindicate himself from the charge. At the same time, his daughters, the Countess of Sunderland and Lady Railton, resigned their appointments as ladies of the bedchamber, and the duke retired into a private station.

That the melancholy failing of avarice, which was unfortunately inherent in the Duke of Marlborough's composition, carried him, on more than one occasion, almost to criminal lengths, there is every reason to believe.[1] Nevertheless, it is im-

[1] Charges of corruption had been brought against Marlborough as early as 1692; and, indeed, his dismissal from office in that year was occasionally attributed to the circumstance of his venality having been discovered. Evelyn inserts in his diary of the 24th of January, 1692–3: "Lord Marlborough, lieutenant-general of the king's army in England, gentleman of the bedchamber, dismissed from all his charges, military and others,

possible not to lament that the private failings of the great victor of Blenheim and Ramillies should have been permitted to become the topic of vulgar gossip and public censure; and we must regret it the more, when we consider that, had he continued in power, the offence would have been overlooked or unknown; and that he was indebted for his downfall, not to the actual commission of the crime, but, in fact, to the predominance of female influence and bedchamber intrigue.

With the fall of Marlborough declined the interests of Protestant Europe. But for the intrigues which introduced a Tory administration, — effected as was that important change by the overbearing insolence of one woman, and the fortuitous influence of another, — Louis the Fourteenth must have accepted any articles of peace, however humbling or disadvantageous, which England chose to impose upon him, and his grandson, Philip, must for ever have renounced his claims to the Spanish crown. The French minister De Torcy exclaimed triumphantly, on hearing the news of Marlborough's disgrace, "What we lose in Flanders we shall gain in England." Such was the general sentiment throughout civilised Europe. "What!" exclaims the great King of Prussia,

for his excessive taking of bribes, covetousness, and extortion on all occasions, from his inferior officers. This was the lord who was entirely advanced by King James, and who was the first who betrayed and forsook his master."

"could not Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, nor Malplaquet, defend the name of that great man; nor even victory itself shield him against envy and detraction?" "What part," he proceeds, "would England have acted without that true hero! He supported and raised her, and would have exalted her to the pinnacle of greatness, but for those wretched female intrigues, of which France took advantage to occasion his disgrace. Louis the Fourteenth was lost, if Marlborough had retained his power two years more."

Burnet, with something of the same enthusiasm, observes: "The queen wrote him a letter, complaining of the ill-treatment she received from him, and discharged him of all his employments. This was thought very extraordinary, after such long and eminent services. Such accidents, when they happen, show the instability of all human things. This was, indeed, so little expected, that those who looked for precedents could find none since the disgrace of Belisarius in Justinian's time; the only thing pretended to excuse it was, his being considered as the head of those who opposed the peace, on which the court seemed to set their hearts."

If we may credit the accounts of his contemporaries, the duke exhibited but little dignity in disgrace. He is described, in a letter of the period, as "very humble, and visiting every creature that had any credit."

Marlborough was no sooner dismissed from his employments, than he was subjected to a persecution as disgraceful to the queen, by whom it was authorised, as to the nation who permitted it, and which, but for the fact that the charges brought against him were, unfortunately, not unfounded, must be regarded as cruel and iniquitous in the extreme. In addition to the circumstance already referred to, of his having received a considerable bribe from the contractors for supplying the army with bread, he was also charged with having deducted, and appropriated to his own account, two and a half per cent. from the pay of the foreign troops maintained by England.

Had these offences been committed in our own time, they would very properly be regarded as the grossest acts of corruption. But in the reign of Queen Anne, official salaries and emoluments were determined on a different basis than at present; and what would now be regarded as a criminal appropriation of the public money was formerly looked upon as a customary and legitimate perquisite. That the Duke of Marlborough improved considerably on former precedents, that he took a very unfair advantage of a faulty system, and drafted a more than usual quantity of the public money into his own coffers, his well-known character for avarice renders not at all unlikely. On the other hand, it was affirmed by the duke, in self-defence, that the sum which he received from

one of the contractors, Sir Solomon Medina, was, after all, a not unusual donation from an army contractor; that the whole of the money which he deducted from the public funds did not exceed £30,000; that this sum was of less amount than what had been allowed to King William for contingencies; and, what was a still more effective argument, he insisted that the whole had been expended in obtaining intelligence of the movements of the enemy. Unfortunately, the House of Commons viewed the conduct and motives of Marlborough in a different light. It was voted that his practices had been unwarrantable and illegal; and, immediately on this decision being made known to the queen, the attorney-general received orders to institute a prosecution against him, in order to recover the money which he had deducted from the pay of the foreign troops. In addition to these rigorous proceedings, the greatest man of his age found himself daily attacked by the hireling scribblers and pamphleteers of the day; and it is even affirmed that the workmen employed in the erection of Blenheim House — though their wages ought to have been paid by the crown — were encouraged to sue him for the money which was due to them.

In the midst of these distressing events, the Duke of Marlborough suddenly and unexpectedly took his departure from the scene of persecution, by embarking at Dover for Ostend on the 14th

of November, 1712. This circumstance was considered by our ancestors to be intimately connected with some of the dark intrigues of the period, and was, unquestionably, a step which a man, conscious of his own innocence, would have long hesitated to adopt. Since the reign of Queen Anne, the historian has had access to many valuable archives, which have thrown considerable light on the complicated machinery of an intriguing period. Nevertheless, the voluntary exile of the Duke of Marlborough, in 1712, is one of those difficult problems which will probably for ever remain unsolved. Speaker Onslow says: "His going, his staying, and his return, afforded many observations not very favourable to him. The whole is a mystery, that time perhaps will never unfold; it is enough for us that he, who was the first man of this country, was confessedly the first man of the age." Archdeacon Coxe also observes: "I will not attempt to detail any further circumstances of this mysterious transaction, which we have no clue to unravel, but merely observe that it received the entire approbation of the queen."

Her Majesty's "entire approbation" appears to have amounted to little more than a cursory remark which she made to the Duchess of Hamilton, that "the Duke of Marlborough had acted wisely in going abroad." As the duke was at this period personally disagreeable to his royal

mistress; as his presence in England was particularly inconvenient to the Tories; and, moreover, as the queen could not fail to foresee that the continued persecution of this great man must eventually render her in the highest degree unpopular, she could not be expected to disapprove of a measure which both accorded with her own wishes, and promoted her personal ease. The duke, on quitting England, received the necessary "pass" from his political enemy, Lord Bolingbroke. According to Oldmixon, who cites the respectable authority of Arthur Maynwaring, the pass in question was accompanied by a letter from the queen, in which she indicated that it would be personally agreeable to her, should the duke meet with an honourable reception in foreign countries.[1] This, however, can scarcely be regarded as implying an approval of his general conduct, as the act was evidently politic, and, moreover, cost nothing. The duke, previous to his departure, solicited an

[1] "This pass," says Archdeacon Coxe, "permits his Grace, the Duke of Marlborough, to go into foreign parts, whithersoever he may think fit, together with his suite, and recommends him to the good offices of all kings, princes, republics, and her Majesty's allies, as well as to commanders and her own subjects; allows him to go freely and commodiously wherever his need requires; and states that such good offices shall be acknowledged and returned when opportunity serves. Dated Windsor Castle, 30th of October, 1712, and countersigned Bolingbroke. His retinue, as enumerated in the pass, consisted of two gentlemen, three *valets-de-chambre*, one cook, three footmen, coachman, postilion, helper, two grooms."

interview with the queen, but the request was refused, and they never afterward met.

According to Lockhart of Carnwath, the duke's departure from England was occasioned by a mutual understanding which was effected between his Grace and the Earl of Oxford, the latter consenting that the prosecution against Marlborough should drop on the express condition that he remove himself quietly out of the kingdom. This, not improbably, was the true secret of the affair. "The process," says Lockhart, "against the duke for stopping the percentage from the pay of the foreign troops was commenced at the instance of the House of Commons, but soon afterward it dropped, occasioned, as was then said, and reasonably believed, by an agreement betwixt the Lord Oxford and the Duke of Marlborough that the process should be let fall on condition that his Grace would next summer go out of the kingdom, and give no further countenance to the Whig party, which he accordingly performed to the no small displeasure of the Whigs, who thereupon disclaimed terribly against him." The duke's sudden departure, however, has been attributed to other and less satisfactory causes; and it has been confidently affirmed that Oxford held in his possession such unquestionable proofs of Marlborough having been deeply implicated in more than one treasonable transaction that his fortune, and even his life, lay in the minister's hands.

John, Duke of Marlborough.

Photo-etching after painting by Kneller.

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According to other authorities, the proofs of the duke's guilt rested on the discovery of his secret and well-known correspondence with the exiled court at St. Germains. Carte, indeed, affirms, on the authority of Erasmus Lewis, the faithful secretary of the Earl of Oxford, that Marlborough was so deeply implicated in the intrigues of the Jacobites that he consented, in his capacity of general, to assemble at a certain hour, and in different parts of Westminster, a body of two or three thousand men, who on a sudden were to have made an attack on St. James's Palace. According to Lewis, this project was not only made known to his patron, the Earl of Oxford, but Lewis himself received orders to attend the council, which assembled in consequence of the alarm, and was even present during their deliberations. Charges, however, of this vague character are more easily advanced than substantiated. We have no reason, indeed, to discredit the solemn assurances of Lewis, on whose character for veracity no stain appears to rest; but, on the other hand, it is more probable that Carte should either have misinterpreted, or misunderstood, the words of his informant than that the duke should have contemplated the commission of a wicked and insane act, the very absurdity of which, added to our preconceived notions of his cautious character, renders his criminality unlikely in the extreme.

But an offence of so heinous a nature — sup-

ported, moreover, by evidence of a more momentous character — has been laid to the charge of the Duke of Marlborough, the proofs of which, it is said, having fallen into the hands of the ministry, enabled them to offer him the option either of retiring quietly from England, or of being arraigned as a criminal before his peers. According to the further relation of Erasmus Lewis, the English government were in possession of the most convincing evidence that the duke, in the year 1706, entered into a secret negotiation with the French court, in the course of which it was stipulated on the part of Marlborough that he should receive the sum of two millions of crowns, provided he succeeded in effecting a peace between his own country and France. Were this the sole evidence in support of this grave charge, we should be inclined to regard it as not only improbable but absurd. There is proof, however, in the memoirs of the Marquis de Torcy that that minister, in 1709, actually received orders from his master, Louis the Fourteenth, to offer the duke the large sum of four millions of livres on the understanding that he would exert his personal influence to effect a peace, and, at the same time, obtain some favourable conditions for the French nation. The king concludes one of his letters to De Torcy: "I am willing you should offer the Duke of Marlborough four millions should he enable me to keep Naples and Sicily for the king, my grandson, and to pre-

serve Dunkirk with its fortifications and harbour, and Strasburg and Landau, in the manner above explained, or even the same sum were Sicily to be excepted out of this last article."

That the Duke of Marlborough ever actually received a bribe from the French king is neither asserted by Erasmus Lewis in his narrative, nor is there the least evidence in De Torcy's memoirs of the fact. The simple statement of Lewis is that the duke consented, on certain conditions, to receive a sum of money from the King of France; that circumstances prevented his benefiting by the treason; that the proofs of his being engaged in this disgraceful negotiation remained in the hands of the French king; and that as soon as it suited the views of that monarch he exposed the duke's treason to the Earl of Oxford. Lewis further adds that it was expressly stipulated by the French king, in his communications with Oxford, that the duke's life should at all events be spared.

An additional fact was related by Lewis to Carte, who stated that a private interview took place between Marlborough and Oxford, in consequence of these proceedings. "They had a meeting," he says, "at Thomas Harley's house, in James Street, Westminster, Oxford coming to the street door in his coach, the Duke of Marlborough in a chair to the garden door opening into the park. It was then resolved that the Duke of Marlborough should go abroad."

The truth of this story is corroborated by the following anecdote recorded by Dalrymple. That writer was informed by Gordon, the principal of the Scots College at Paris, that at the close of the reign of Queen Anne (when Marlborough and the Earl of Oxford had become sworn enemies) the latter, under the pretence of being in the interests of the exiled family, got possession of the original letter addressed by Marlborough to King James, in which he announced the projected attack upon Brest. The life of Marlborough was by this means placed in the power of his enemy. "It is known," says Dalrymple, "that there was a private meeting between the duke and Lord Oxford, at Mr. Thomas Harley's house, to which the duke came by a back door, immediately after which he quitted England." Dalrymple was further informed by the Archbishop of York, grandson to the Earl of Oxford, that after the death of that nobleman the Duchess of Marlborough contrived to get possession of the letter, which she instantly destroyed.

In the life of the Duke of Marlborough, in the "Biographia Britannica," an anecdote is related which is so far of importance, as tending to support the supposition that Oxford really held proofs in his hand of the guilt of his political adversary. "After the accession of King George the First, when the Earl of Oxford was impeached and committed to the Tower, and preparations were made for his trial, it is well known that a stop was sud-

denly put to it, to the great disappointment of a large part of the nation. There is a tradition, relative to this event, in which the Duke of Marlborough is concerned. It is said that at that time, Mr. Auditor Harley waited upon the Duchess of Marlborough and showed her a letter, formerly written by the duke, which proved his correspondence with the Pretender. Mr. Harley, after having read the letter, threatened that it should be produced at his brother, the Earl of Oxford's, trial unless the proceedings against him were stopped. The duchess, watching her opportunity, seized the letter out of Mr. Harley's hand, threw it instantly into the fire, and then defied his malice. Upon this he replied: 'Madam, I knew your Grace too well to trust you; the letter you have burnt is only a copy; the original is safe in my own possession.'"

Under ordinary circumstances, we should be inclined to attach but little importance to this "traditional story." It acquires, however, some weight when coupled with the following narrative, which was communicated by Sergeant Comyns, a man of some eminence, to James West, Esq., member for St. Albans, and president of the Royal Society. The narrator informs us: "Before the Earl of Oxford's intended trial, he sent his son, Lord Harley, together with Sergeant Comyns (afterward chief baron of the exchequer), to the Duke of Marlborough, requesting his Grace's attendance at the trial. The

duke, in some concern, inquired what the earl wanted with him. Mr. Sergeant Comyns replied that it was only to ask his Grace a question or two. The duke walked about the room for about a quarter of an hour, without giving any answer, and seemed greatly disturbed; after which, he asked for what purpose his attendance was required. Lord Harley told him it was only as to his hand. 'What,' says his Grace, 'has your father any letters of mine?' 'Yes,' replied Lord Harley, 'all the letters your Grace ever wrote to him since the revolution.' Upon this, the duke continued to walk about the room in the greatest uneasiness, and even flung his wig off, in his passion. Mr. Sergeant Comyns interrogating him what answer they should give to the unfortunate lord, he said, 'I will certainly be there.' This was the true reason why the Earl of Oxford was never brought to a trial."

Such are the various circumstances which have relation to the Duke of Marlborough's mysterious departure from England in 1712. In regard to the motives which either compelled or induced him to take the step, there appear to be but two presumptions that need be dwelt upon: first, as is confidently affirmed by Lockhart of Carnwath, that it was to avoid the penalties which would have attended his conviction for purloining the public money; and, secondly, that evidence was possessed by the Earl of Oxford of the duke's

treasonable correspondence with the house of Stuart. One fact, however, is sufficiently certain, that it was the power and machinations of his enemies which compelled him to quit the kingdom; and, consequently, when we consider his exalted rank, his high reputation, and extraordinary personal influence, it is impossible to believe that his enemies could either have acquired or exerted that power, unless he himself, by some very criminal or imprudent act, had placed himself in a position which enabled them to insist on his exile.

During the absence of the Duke of Marlborough in France, his shifting principles underwent another change; and, with a view of again enjoying the sweets of office, there is every reason to believe that the Whig general made friendly overtures to more than one of the Tory ministers of Queen Anne. With the celebrated Bolingbroke he had long been on intimate terms; and when the latter was in the midst of those memorable intrigues which, in the end, procured the downfall of his friend and colleague, the Earl of Oxford, he is said not only to have proposed to strengthen his administration by the recall of the Duke of Marlborough, but to have caused reports to be circulated that the duke was shortly to return to England at the express desire of the queen and her ministry.

At the same time, the Duke of Marlborough —

impressed with the conviction that the queen fully intended to name her brother to succeed her on the throne — renewed his former professions of attachment and fidelity to the exiled court. "He wrote to the Duchess of Berwick," says Macpherson; "he even sent a letter to the late King James's queen. He despatched one of his retainers to France. He empowered him to convey the most solemn protestations of his attachment to the Chevalier St. George, assuring him with an oath that he would rather cut off his own right hand than oppose his views to the throne." Such was the utter want of principle of this great man. At length, when all hope from the intrigues of Bolingbroke had failed, and when it was evident that he was mistaken as to the queen's views regarding the succession, we find him falling back on more popular principles, and professing himself, with renewed vehemence, the faithful servant of the house of Hanover.

Such is the view which Macpherson, on the authority of the "Stuart Papers" of 1713 and 1714, takes of the conduct of the Duke of Marlborough at the close of the reign of Queen Anne. It is known, indeed, that the deductions of Macpherson are not always to be depended upon; and, moreover, it has been affirmed that, especially in this instance, he has built more on his authorities than the authorities themselves admit. With this view of the question, we should be inclined to award to

the Duke of Marlborough every possible advantage which could be derived from a presumed character for inaccuracy in the historian. Unfortunately, however, we have recently had access to improved sources of information, which, in addition to the "Stuart Papers," themselves go far to prove that the duke really formed an intimate political connection with Bolingbroke, while, at the same time, his several intrigues with the house of Hanover and the exiled court are proved by his published correspondence at the period.

In regard to Marlborough's presumed connection with Bolingbroke, it may be mentioned that the following note, in the handwriting of the Earl of Hardwicke, was discovered at the end of the Onslow copy of Burnet: "The Speaker (Mr. Onslow) has told me that he had been informed by the late Lord Orford (Sir Robert Walpole) and Arthur Moore,[1] that Lord Bolingbroke had formed a scheme of administration, upon the

[1] Burnet says of Arthur Moore, that "he rose from being a footman, without any education, to be a great dealer in trade;" to which Lord Dartmouth adds, in a note on the passage: "There was no more objection to Arthur Moore's having raised himself from a footman, than there was for a Scotch Presbyterian minister's having done so to the bishopric of Salisbury." Speaker Onslow, who was well acquainted with Moore, speaks of him as a person of extraordinary parts and great knowledge of the world. He especially records his generosity, his good humour, and conversational powers. Moore had originally made a large fortune, but, from his profuse mode of living, appears at length to have died in indigent circumstances.

turning out the Earl of Orford, by which himself was to have been lord treasurer, Sir William Wyndham one of the secretaries of state, and Arthur Moore chancellor of the exchequer; and it is now generally believed that the Duke of Marlborough was to have been restored to the command of the army." Swift also writes in one of his letters to Stella: "I was early this morning with Secretary St. John, and gave him a memorial to get the queen's letter for the first-fruits, who has promised to do it in a very few days. He told me he had been with the Duke of Marlborough, who was lamenting his former wrong steps in joining with the Whigs, and said he was worn out with age, fatigue, and misfortunes."

In addition to these passages, it may be observed that Lockhart of Carnwath speaks confidently of the duke's political connection with Bolingbroke; and as these circumstances were, in all probability, unknown to Macpherson, they give additional weight to the view adopted of the Duke of Marlborough's conduct by that writer. It is a remarkable fact, which has only recently been brought to light, that, very shortly before the death of Queen Anne, the Duke of Marlborough offered to advance £20,000 to the Elector of Hanover to enable him to maintain his influence in this country; but the fact is still more startling that, immediately after the elector became King of England, — finding himself neglected by the new

sovereign, — the duke actually advanced a sum of money to the Pretender, which seems to have been expended in supporting the rebellion of 1715. Political profligacy could scarcely be extended to more criminal lengths.

Under ordinary circumstances, it would have been gratifying to find two such eminent men as Marlborough and Bolingbroke, though opposed to each other on the arena of politics, yet meeting on friendly and even affectionate terms in private life, and mutually admiring the extraordinary, though very opposite, genius of the other. Fortunately, indeed, not only was this good understanding established between them, but each has bequeathed a pleasing testimonial of his affection for the other. The character which Bolingbroke has drawn of the Duke of Marlborough is pictured in his own most eloquent language. Speaking of the exultation of the French at the death of King William, or rather of the disastrous consequences with which that event threatened the arms of England and the allies, he observes: "A short time showed how vain the fears of some and the hopes of others were. By his death, the Duke of Marlborough was raised to the head of the army, and indeed of the confederacy; where he, a new, a private man, a subject, acquired, by merit and by management, a more deciding influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain, had given to King Will-

iam. Not only all the parts of that vast machine, the grand alliance, were kept more compact and entire, but a more vigorous motion was given to the whole; and instead of languishing out disastrous campaigns, we saw every scene of the war full of action. All those wherein he appeared, and many of those wherein he was not then an actor, but abettor, however, of their action, were crowned with the most triumphant success. I take, with pleasure, this opportunity of doing justice to that great man, whose faults I knew, whose virtues I admired; and whose memory, as the greatest general and as the greatest minister that our country, or perhaps any other, has produced, I honour." The duke's regard for Bolingbroke, though expressed in a different manner, appears to have been no less sincere. He used to style him, familiarly, "Harry St. John," and after the death of his only son, the Marquis of Blandford, observed that he had no comfort in life but Harry St. John, whom he loved and regarded as his own son.

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN CHURCHILL, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

Marlborough's Public Entry into London on the Day after Queen Anne's Death — Doctor Sacheverel Inveighs against His Conduct on This Occasion from the Pulpit — Marlborough Is Appointed Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Land Forces, and Master of the Ordnance — But Is Reduced to the Shadow of His Former Authority — Is Personally Disliked by George the First — Reasons for This Dislike — Rebellion in 1715 Defeated by Marlborough's Prudent Counsels to Government — His Character as a Negotiator and an Orator — Burnet's Sketch of Him — Marlborough's Strong Religious Feelings — His Decorous Conduct after Marriage — Extract from Adam Smith — Marlborough's Humanity in War — Anecdotes of His Evenness of Temper — Curious Anecdote Related by Lord Bolingbroke — Swift's Opinion of Marlborough — His Avarice and Duplicity — Extract from Spence's Anecdotes, and from Doctor King's Anecdotes of His Own Times — Singular Instance of Marlborough's Liberality — Prince Eugene's Opinion of Him — Compliment Paid Him by Peter the Great, and by the Emperor, Joseph the First — Anecdote of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden — Marlborough's Domestic Habits and Favourite Pursuits at Blenheim — Extract from Coxe's Life — Private Theatricals at Blenheim — Marlborough's Last Years — His Failing Powers of Understanding Exaggerated by Party Writers — His Death and Public Funeral — Enumeration of His Children.

ON the death of Queen Anne the Duke of Marlborough returned in a kind of triumph to

London, where he arrived on the 2d of August, 1714, the day following the queen's decease. The indecent elation which he displayed by making a public entry into the metropolis — at the very time when his royal mistress lay extended on the bed of death; when the bells of the capital were solemnly tolling for her departure; and when the shops of the citizens were closed out of respect for her memory — has been severely and deservedly reprehended. Conduct at once so impolitic and so heartless was of course deprecated, with either real or pretended indignation, by the opposite party; and among others who raised their voices against the offending hero, the celebrated Doctor Sacheverel appears to have thundered forth his invectives even from the pulpit. About a week after the queen's death, Doctor Kennet, afterward Bishop of Peterborough, writes to Dr. Samuel Blackwell: "Doctor Sacheverel has vehemently reflected on the Duke of Marlborough's public entry, and called it an unparalleled insolence and a vile trampling upon royal ashes." "When the queen was dead," says Lord Dartmouth, "the duke made a public entry into London, which surprised all the world, but had no effect beyond raising a universal laughter." If the world could forget his splendid services, no wonder that the duke should forget himself.

That Marlborough expected to derive extraordinary advantages from the queen's death there

can be little question; but his hopes were destined ere long to be signally disappointed. Bothmar writes, soon after the demise of the queen: "He is not pleased that he is not of the regency, and that there is any man but the king higher than him in this country." It was impossible, indeed, that a man of such influence, who was still recognised as a partisan of the Whigs, and who had performed so many services, not only for that party, but for the country at large, could be entirely overlooked by a Whig monarch and a Whig ministry. Accordingly, he shortly afterward received the appointments of captain-general and commander-in-chief of the land forces, and was named colonel of the first regiment of Foot Guards, and master of the ordnance. "But although," says Coxe, "he was thus distinguished with honours and employments, he was reduced to the shadow of his former authority; for he was admitted to little share in the government of the state, and confined to the routine of his official stations." Such neglect, proceeding as it did from his own friends and political partisans, must have been more galling to the fallen hero than all the injuries and mortifications which he had experienced from his professed foes. With the exception, indeed, of the ordinary patronage derived from the tenure of his official appointments, he possessed scarcely the slightest influence as a public man; indeed, his credit at court

is said to have been so low that he was, on one occasion, unable to procure a lieutenancy for a friend. To George the First he appears to have been personally disagreeable; and it is even affirmed that, on occasions when he was anxious to obtain a boon from that monarch, he used to apply to Pulteney, then secretary at war, to ask it as a personal favour to himself. "Do not say it is for me," he was accustomed to add, "for whatever I ask is sure to be denied."

The dislike which George the First appears to have conceived for the Duke of Marlborough has been differently accounted for. "Although," says Coxe, "he treated the duke with a semblance of respect, he never forgot the supposed slight which he had experienced in 1708, when Marlborough concealed from him the projected operations of the campaign." According to other accounts, the king's prejudice against the duke originated in Marlborough having offered him no military command of importance during the period he headed the allied army. But by far the most probable cause of their estrangement may be traced to the king having been made acquainted with Marlborough's former treasonable correspondence with the court of St. Germains; the proofs of which Harley had probably transmitted to him before he quitted Hanover, with the view of undermining the duke in his regard.

The last occasion on which the Duke of Marl-

borough seems to have been engaged in any public business of importance was during the rebellion of 1715, when his advice was very naturally asked, and we are assured that it was owing to the government having followed his counsels that the rebellion was so easily defeated; and, moreover, he is said to have foretold the time and circumstances of its suppression in the very manner in which they afterward actually occurred. It may be remarked that the advice which crushed this celebrated outbreak was given very shortly after he had professed the most devoted attachment for the house of Stuart; and had vehemently sworn that he would rather cut off his right hand than oppose the claims of the Chevalier St. George to the throne.

On the military genius of this illustrious man, it is of course unnecessary to dwell; it is sufficient to say that he gained every battle which he fought; that he out-manœuvred every general who was opposed to him; and that he obtained possession of every town which he besieged. That he was also an able politician is almost as certain as that he was an unprincipled one. These prominent features in his history, as far at least as they have reference to the character of the man and of his times, have already been sufficiently illustrated in the present memoir. As a negotiator, also, his character for ability remains unquestioned; and though he can scarcely

be termed a great orator, he, nevertheless, displayed that clear and powerful understanding, that enviable command of language, and that consummate insight into human nature, which embrace qualities perhaps even more rare and valuable than the native gift of eloquence itself.

Such were the more shining qualities of the great Duke of Marlborough; but as an inquiry into private character, and into the general motives of human action, falls more immediately within the province of this work, it may be interesting to illustrate our concluding notices of the duke with a few personal anecdotes, and some cursory remarks. The brief summary which Bishop Burnet draws of Marlborough's character unquestionably comprehends the best features both of his capacity and conduct.

"He was a man," says Burnet, "of a noble and graceful appearance, bred up in the court with no literature; but he had a solid and clear understanding, with a constant presence of mind. He knew the arts of living in a court beyond any man in it. He caressed all people with a soft and obliging deportment, and was always ready to do good offices. He had no fortune to set up on; this put him on all the methods of acquiring one. And that went so far into him, that he did not shake it off when he was in a much higher elevation; nor was his expense suited to his posts."

Marlborough, indeed, was not only gifted with

all those graceful accomplishments which were then thought indispensable to form a perfect courtier, but he was also distinguished for higher qualities, which prove that a share of moral goodness is not always incompatible with political profligacy, and that religion may be inwardly reverenced, though her tenets are not implicitly obeyed. Whether from policy or principle, the duke showed an outward regard for the religion of his country; he was exact in the performance of his devotional duties; when he was engaged on his foreign campaigns, divine service was always regularly performed, both morning and evening, in his camp; previous to an engagement, prayers were solemnly offered up at the head of each regiment; and when a victory was obtained, it was acknowledged by as solemn a thanksgiving.

In his youth, indeed, Marlborough had not always been proof against the seductive allurements of the court of Charles the Second; but with the heyday of youth also expired the taste for criminal gratification, and from the hour of his marriage, not envy, nor even political hatred, dared to couple libertinism with his name, or ventured to throw a doubt on his conjugal fidelity. In the camp, as well as the drawing-room, he set an example, as well of decorum and good order, as of reverential piety and severe morality. He permitted no improper freedom of discourse, even in his most social hours; drunkenness in his military

followers was regarded by him as crime; he severely reprobated an oath, and an indecent expression, uttered in his presence, is said to have been resented by him as a personal affront.

Marlborough, in addition to these redeeming qualities, was distinguished by an ingratiating suavity of manner, and discovered an interest in the affairs of all with whom he conversed, the charm of which was universally acknowledged. He was possessed, also, of an evenness of temper which it was impossible to ruffle; and such was the self-possession which he displayed under circumstances the most trying, and provocations the most irritating, that Adam Smith, in his "Treatise on Moral Sentiments," introduces him as a memorable example in support of one of his theories.

"It is a characteristic," he says, "almost peculiar to the great Duke of Marlborough, that ten years of such uninterrupted and splendid successes, as scarce any other general could boast of, never betrayed him into any rash action, scarce into a single rash word or expression; the same temperate coolness and self-command cannot, I think, be ascribed to any other great warrior of later times."

Humanity was another redeeming quality of the Duke of Marlborough. After a battle we usually find him lamenting the horrors of the scene with an almost feminine tenderness of feeling; and in his generous anxiety to alleviate human distress, he seems to have sympathised almost as deeply with

his wounded adversaries as with the sufferings of his own men. It was a high compliment paid him by a French writer, Duclos, that his attention to his wounded prisoners first set the example of that humanity which has since so happily alleviated the horrors and calamities of war.

With regard to the extraordinary evenness of Marlborough's temper, more than one interesting anecdote has been recorded. He was one day riding with Commissary Marriot, when, a shower of rain coming on, he desired his servant to bring him his cloak. The man occupying a considerable time in unbuckling the straps, and the rain descending with increased violence, the duke again called out to the servant, and inquired what could possibly delay him so long. "You must wait, sir," grumbled the fellow, "till I can get at it, if it rains cats and dogs." The duke turned around to Marriot, and, instead of expressing any indignation at the man's insolence, with the utmost coolness observed: "Now, I would not be of that fellow's temper for all the world."

We have another instance of the sweetness of the duke's temper, and his singular imperturbability of manner. During one of his campaigns, he positively refused, apparently on very unsatisfactory grounds, to give battle to the French, notwithstanding Prince Eugene, in open council, declared his conviction that there was a moral certainty of their being beaten. The prince, on

being thus unexpectedly thwarted in his views, became extremely angry, and at length so entirely lost the command of his temper as to load the duke with the most abusive epithets, and even to call in question his personal courage. It is said, indeed, that, after the council was over, he sent a challenge to his colleague, which, however, the other unequivocally declined. The next morning the duke suddenly entered the prince's tent, and requested that he would immediately rise and prepare for battle. The reason, he said, for his having refused to fight the day before was the fact of there being a person present in council who was in the pay of the enemy, and who would immediately have disclosed their plans to the French. "After we have won the battle," he added, "I will give you whatever satisfaction you please." It is needless to say that the prince was entirely satisfied with the explanation, and that harmony was again restored between them.

Several instances have been recorded of Marlborough's good nature. Among others, it is affirmed that, although no epicure himself, it afforded him particular pleasure to watch others enjoying their meals. He is said, indeed, to have occasionally concealed himself, in order to watch a hungry man satisfying his appetite.

While recording the duke's personal peculiarities, we may mention a curious anecdote related of him by Lord Bolingbroke. The latter states

that, previous to the Duke of Marlborough's marriage, he took particular pleasure in tying and untying Miss Jennings's garters. Whenever Lord Bolingbroke repeated this story, he used to add, — "What is known to a woman is known to the world." [1] It is just possible that Gay may have alluded to this circumstance when he exclaims in his poem of "The Tea Table," —

> "And what if Cynthio Sylvia's garter tied.
> Who such a foot and such a leg would hide?
> When crooked-kneed Phillis can expose to view
> Her gold-clock'd stocking, and her tawdry shoe?"

The two great vices of the Duke of Marlborough were duplicity and avarice. Swift, in his notes to Bishop Burnet's "History of His Own Times," speaks of him as "a composition of perfidiousness and avarice;" and again, in one of his letters to Stella, as being "covetous as hell, and ambitious as the prince of it." The political mortifications of Swift at least exceeded those of the Duke of Marlborough, and as an almost equal want of political principle influenced the actions of both of these extraordinary men, it is not a little

[1] A favourite mistress of the Regent Orleans was once importuning him to entrust her with some political project. He took her by the hand, and led her to a mirror which was in the apartment. "I admit," he said, "that you have one of the prettiest ears I ever saw, but it was not made to be entrusted with a secret."

amusing to find the one commiserating the other for those same weaknesses, for which he himself was as much to be pitied and blamed.

Swift, alluding to a picture which Bolingbroke had sketched him of the discontented state of the Duke of Marlborough's mind, observes: "I swear it pitied me, and I really think they will not do well in too much mortifying that man, although, indeed, it is his own fault." It is no less singular that Doctor Johnson should afterward have unconsciously introduced the names of these two great men in the same couplet, with a view of holding them up to mankind as objects of equal commiseration:

"From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driveller and a show."

On the duke's character for duplicity we have already dwelt at sufficient length, but with regard to his presumed love of money, more than one characteristic anecdote has yet been left untold.

On some occasion, when he was defending his conduct to Queen Anne against the attacks of his enemies, he observed, incidentally, and with great confidence, that he was neither covetous nor ambitious. The queen appeared, for the moment, to assent to the truth of the assertion, but afterward remarked, in her quiet manner, that had she been able, conveniently, to turn around, she should cer-

tainly have freely indulged her mirth, and, as it was, she could scarcely refrain from bursting out laughing in the duke's face.

Pope, in conversation with Spence, persisted in speaking of avarice, as not only the ruling passion of the Duke of Marlborough, but as the mainspring of all his actions, and pretended to clear away the apparent contradictions in his political conduct by attributing them to the circumstance of his being the slave of this melancholy vice. The following passage, which occurs in "Spence's Anecdotes," is alike interesting and curious: "As inconsistent," said Pope, "as the Duke of Marlborough's character may appear to you, yet may it be accounted for, if you gauge his actions by his reigning passion, which was the love of money. He endeavoured at the same time to be well both at Hanover and St. Germains. This surprised you a good deal when I first told you of it, but the plain meaning of it was only this: that he wanted to secure the vast riches he had amassed together, whichever should succeed. He was calm in the heat of the battle; and when he was so near being taken prisoner, in his first campaign in Flanders, he was quite unmoved. It is true, he was like to lose his life in the one and his liberty in the other, but there was none of his money at stake in either.

"This mean passion of that great man operated very strongly in him in the very beginning of his

life, and continued to the end of it. One day, as he was looking over some papers in his scrutoire with Lord Cadogan, he opened one of the little drawers, took out a green purse, and turned some broad pieces out of it, and after viewing them for some time, with a satisfaction that appeared very visible in his face, 'Cadogan,' says he, 'observe these pieces well; they deserve to be observed. There are just forty of them; 'tis the very first sum I ever got in my life, and I have kept it unbroken from that very time to this day.'[1] This shows how early and how strong this passion must have been upon him; as another little affair, which happened in his last decline, at Bath, may serve, among many others, to show how miserably it continued to the end. He was playing there with Dean Jones at picquet for sixpence a game. They played a good while, and the duke left off when winner of one game. Some time after, he desired the dean to pay him his sixpence. The dean said he had no silver. The duke asked him for it over and over, and at last desired that he would change a guinea to pay it him, because he should want it to pay the chair that carried him home. The dean, after so much pressing, did at last get change, paid the duke his sixpence, observed him a little after he had left the room, and declares that, after all the bustle that had been made for his sixpence

[1] It is said of him that, when very young, one of the first purchases which he ever made was a box to put his money in.

the duke actually walked home to save that little expense a chair would have put him to."

A circumstance, corroborative of this anecdote, is related by Doctor King, in his "Anecdotes of His Own Time." "That great captain, the Duke of Marlborough, when he was in the last stage of life, and very infirm, would walk from the public rooms in Bath to his lodgings, in a cold, dark night, to save sixpence in chair-hire. If the duke, who left at his death more than a million and a half sterling, could have foreseen that all his wealth and honours were to be inherited by a grandson of my Lord Trevor's, who had been one of his enemies, would he have been so careful to save sixpence for the sake of his heir? Not for the sake of his heir; but he would have saved sixpence." [1] Another characteristic anecdote is related of the duke's love of money, that when, on the eve of a great battle, Prince Eugene came to confer with him, the duke actually scolded his servant for

[1] Since the above was written, the author has met with another version of this story. "In England," says Noble, "he engrossed almost all power, which he made subservient to his love of money. Spending an evening once at West-Gate, with Lord Bath, and his brother, General Pulteney, who had been the duke's aid-de-camp in Flanders, he lost some money at play. On rising to go to his own residence in another part of Bath, he asked the general to lend him sixpence to pay his chair-hire. The loan was granted. 'Brother,' said Lord Bath, 'I would venture any sum that his Grace goes home on foot; do follow him out.' The general did, and to his astonishment found that he did walk all the way home."

having lighted four candles in his tent instead of two.

The following, it must be admitted, is in opposition to the duke's general character for avarice, and, if true, affords pleasing evidence of his natural goodness of heart. It happened that, on one occasion, he sent to England with despatches a young officer who had particularly distinguished himself in a recent action in Flanders, at the same time giving him a letter of introduction to the duchess, in which he expressed a wish that she would exert herself to obtain the promotion of the bearer. The duchess received the young officer in a very gracious manner; but he no sooner introduced the subject of his own views and wishes, than she inquired of him in the plainest terms whether he had a thousand pounds at his command, with which he could purchase his required advancement. The young officer blushed, and unhesitatingly acknowledged the paucity of his means. "Well, then," said the duchess, "you may return to the duke." He, accordingly, returned to Flanders and related to his patron the reception which he had met with. The duke smiled, and acknowledged he had expected as much; however, he presented him at the same time with the sum of a thousand pounds, with which the other obtained his promotion. There is another anecdote, which, if true, would redound greatly to the credit of the duke, that, during the rebellion of 1715, he sent

the Earl of Mar a present of ten thousand pounds.[1] The story, however, for many reasons, is little worthy of credit.

Prince Eugene appears, in more than one instance, to have made himself merry with the duke's acknowledged failing of avarice. These two distinguished men were once engaged in conversation, when Marlborough dwelt at unnecessary length on his regard for his royal mistress, Queen Anne. "*Regina Pecunia*, he means," was the prince's whispered remark to a person who was near him.

Again, Prince Eugene having received an almost illegible letter from his great colleague, handed it over to another person to read. This person remarking that one of the great difficulties in deciphering the duke's writing arose from his invariably neglecting to put a tittle upon an *i*, "Ah!" said the prince, "that is because it saves ink."

After all, Eugene appears to have done full justice to the more noble qualities of his illustrious friend. The prince observes, in his memoirs: "We sincerely loved and esteemed each other; he was indeed a great statesman and general." But perhaps the greatest compliment ever paid to the Duke of Marlborough was by Peter the Great of Russia. After the battle of Pultowa, although Marlborough was entirely unknown to

[1] Kippis observes, after speaking of Tyers as his "ingenious friend," that he is "by no means" convinced of the truth of the anecdote.

him, except by reputation, the Czar sent a captain of his guards express to the duke, to convey to him the tidings of the victory.

From other potentates of Europe, the duke received compliments less remarkable, perhaps, but scarcely less flattering. The Emperor Joseph the First purposely erected Mindelheim into a principality, in order that, by conferring it on the duke, the latter might have a seat in the German Diet. Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, also, though he retired from their first interview personally prejudiced against the duke, was no less an admirer of his military genius. Charles, it seems, had presented himself at the meeting with his hair scarcely combed, and otherwise little distinguished either by the elegance or neatness of his attire; while Marlborough appeared powdered and perfumed, and wearing the flowing periwig of the period. The Swedish monarch, mistaking these appearances for the worst kind of foppery, appears at first to have conceived the greatest contempt for the English general; however, he afterward acknowledged his error, and was forced to admit that extreme neatness of person was not altogether incompatible with true greatness.

The duke's intercourse with Frederick the First of Prussia was not without circumstances of interest. He won the heart and the confidence of that monarch, by pretending that it was too great an honour to sit at the same table with him, and

insisting on standing behind his chair. He is said, on another occasion, to have ingeniously discovered the intentions of Frederick at the commencement of a campaign, by observing the character of the maps which were lying accidentally on the king's table.

The last years of the Duke of Marlborough, according to his enemies, were spent in squabbling with his workmen at Blenheim; according to his admirers, in attending to his parliamentary engagements, and performing the duties of his official employments. "The intervals of his leisure," says Coxe, "when not passed in London, were spent at Blenheim, Holywell House, or Windsor Lodge. His habits of life were perfectly domestic, and did not relieve the fond anxiety he had manifested, while engaged in busier scenes, for the society of his family and friends. His favourite and constant exercise was riding, either in a carriage or on horseback; and, whenever his health permitted, in walking around his grounds, particularly at Blenheim, where he delighted to contemplate his own creation. His amusements consisted in the company of his friends, whom he was accustomed to receive without ceremony, or in the recreation of cards. He played at ombre, basset, and picquet; sometimes, with his grandchildren, even at commerce; but his favourite game was whist."

From an account bequeathed us by a Miss Cairnes, who, subsequently, became the wife of Cadwallader, seventh Lord Blayney, and who in

her youth appears to have been frequently domesticated at Blenheim, we glean some interesting particulars respecting the amusements and habits of the great hero at the close of his career. According to this lady, the duke felt a lively interest in the education of his granddaughters, superintended their lessons in music and dancing, and derived particular pleasure from witnessing their dramatic exhibitions in which other juvenile members of his family or household took a part. Among other plays selected for their representation, appear to have been Dryden's tragedy of "All for Love," and Rowe's play of "Tamerlane," in which latter production Marlborough's old antagonist, Louis the Fourteenth, was supposed to be portrayed in the character of Bajazet. A sketch of the *dramatis personæ* in "All for Love," as performed before the great Duke of Marlborough, may perhaps afford amusement to the reader.

ALL FOR LOVE; OR, THE WORLD WELL LOST.

MARK ANTHONY	Captain Fish (the Page of the Duchess).
VENTIDIUS	Old Mr. Jennings.
SERAPION (THE HIGH PRIEST)	Miss Cairnes.
ALEXAS	Mrs. Lavie.
CLEOPATRA.	Lady Charlotte Macarthy.
OCTAVIA	Lady Anne Spencer.
CHILDREN OF ANTHONY . .	Lady Anne Egerton, Lady Diana Spencer.

[*Scene: the Bow-window Room.*]

[*Great Screens for changing Scenes.*]

"The Bishop of Winchester,"[1] writes Lady Blayney "writ a prologue upon the occasion, which I think I have given the Duchess of Marlborough. Miss Cairnes, as high priest, wore a very fine surplice that came from Holland for the chapel; no sacrilege, for the chapel was not finished many years after. What makes me call it a fine surplice is, that all the breast was worked in what, many years after, was called Dresden work. The old duke was so pleased that we played it three times; first, because we were to play it; sometime after for Lord Winchelsea, then for Lord Finch, a great favourite there; the third time at the duke's request. The duchess scratched out some of the most amorous speeches, and there was no embrace allowed. In short, no offence to the company, I suppose we made a very grand appearance. There was profusion of brocade rolls and of what was to be the window-curtains of Blenheim. Jewels, you may believe, in plenty; and I think Mark Anthony wore the sword that the emperor gave the Duke of Marlborough."

Unfortunately, the Duke of Marlborough was subjected, in his later years, to those ills of mind and body — those ravages of disease and infirmi-

[1] Benjamin Hoadley, Bishop of Winchester. The bishop's prologue, which is printed in Coxe's life of the duke, contains, in very bad verse, the most fulsome encomiums on the heroism of the duke, and the beauty of the duchess, to which the noble and venerable couple seem to have listened with the utmost complacency.

ties of old age — which, though the general lot of man, are rendered peculiarly affecting when they bow down the body, and affect the intellects of one so illustrious. The celebrated verse of Johnson, —

"From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,"—

suggests reflections as painful and as humiliating to human nature as could possibly be conveyed by the most laboured homily. Of the condition of the great duke, at the close of his career, more than one writer has given a striking and pathetic account. He is usually described as having outlived his vast intellects; he is said to have been an imbecile and unconscious dependent on the kind offices of others; and, moreover, while in this state of mental inanity, the duchess (with the view of evincing to the world that he was incapable of conducting his affairs) is accused of having paraded his infirmities before her acquaintances and friends. In the early part of his career, it had been prophesied of him by Madame de Croiz that he would become the greatest man in England, but that he would afterward lose his head; and, accordingly, when he came to lose his understanding, it was pretended that the prediction had been verified.

That party writers, and mere writers for effect, have considerably exaggerated the distressing condition of the Duke of Marlborough in his last years,

there is every reason to believe. The duke, indeed, in consequence of repeated attacks of paralysis, is known to have been partially deprived of the power of articulation; there were certain words which he was unable to pronounce, and perhaps the disorder with which he was so grievously afflicted may in a measure have affected his memory and understanding. But, on the other hand, it appears by the journals of the lords that he attended the sittings of Parliament, and even sat on committees, till within seven months of his death; and, moreover, if we may trust the laboured and exculpatory statement of his duchess, the duke, when he made his will about a year before his death, was in the full possession of his intellectual faculties.

It appears, therefore, by these statements, that if the powerful mind of Marlborough was ever reduced to that state of inanity which has been feelingly described by some writers, the affliction could only have fallen upon him at the very close of his long life. The more reasonable presumption seems to be, that the duke (unconscious of his failing powers, and shrinking, with a natural repugnance, from the prospect of exchanging those habits of industry and exertion to which he had long been habituated for a sedentary and inactive life) clung, with a pardonable fondness, to the active performance of his duties as a minister and statesman, long after the increasing infirmities of disease and old age should have warned him to

retire. The world, ever alive to the weaknesses of the great, could not fail to be made acquainted with the tale of his faltering voice and declining memory, and, consequently, comparing these evidences of decay with the fire and energy of that man who had fought the battles and guided the councils of Queen Anne, it probably considerably exaggerated an affecting picture, and imagined a contrast more striking and more humiliating than the circumstances in reality warranted. The duke, it may be remarked, notwithstanding the feebleness of mind and body to which he was reduced by repeated attacks of paralysis, persisted in retaining his employments of captain-general and master of the ordnance. To those, therefore, who seek in the story of the Duke of Marlborough for an example that the most exalted of mankind are not exempt from the common ills of human nature, the admission of the duke's apologist, Coxe, that "he was a mere cipher, and exposed to repeated slights and mortifications, even in his own departments," will afford sufficient food for moral reflection.

Respecting the last illness of the Duke of Marlborough, but few particulars have, unfortunately, been bequeathed to us. For some days previous to his death he was confined entirely to his couch, and in his last hours is said to have been fully sensible that his end was approaching. After the prayers for the sick had been offered up in his

presence, the duchess inquired whether he had heard them. "Yes," he replied, "and I joined in them." During some hours afterward he discovered no sign of immediate dissolution, but toward morning his strength failed him, and he resigned his spirit without a groan. His death took place at the Lodge, in Windsor Great Park, on the 16th of June, 1722, in the seventy-second year of his age.

The remains of the deceased hero, having been previously embalmed, were conveyed from Windsor Park to Marlborough House, London, and on the night of the 9th of August following were interred in great state, at the east end of the tomb of Henry the Seventh, in Westminster Abbey. The mournful cavalcade moved from Marlborough House along St. James's Park to Hyde Park Corner, and from thence through Piccadilly and Pall Mall, by Charing Cross, to Westminster. At the entrance to the abbey the body was received with a blaze of torches, and the funeral ceremony was not rendered the less impressive from the fine voice and powerful delivery of Bishop Atterbury, then Dean of Westminster, who performed the service.

The death of Marlborough is said to have revived the attachment of his country, and men of all parties are described by our historians as contending which could do most honour to his memory. It is a fact, however, equally dis-

creditable to his countrymen as to the reigning monarch, George the First, that the expense of the obsequies of this illustrious hero was left to be defrayed, not by a grateful and idolising nation, but by his penurious though devoted wife. It may be remarked that, after the death of his widow, the duke's remains were removed to Blenheim, and interred by her side.

By his duchess, the Duke of Marlborough was the father of five children: John, Marquis of Blandford, who died young; Henrietta, married in 1698 to Francis, second Earl of Godolphin; Anne, married to Charles, Earl of Sunderland; Elizabeth, married to Scroop, first Duke of Bridgewater; and Mary, who became the wife of John, second Duke of Montague. The duke was succeeded in his titles by his eldest daughter, the Countess of Godolphin, who assumed the title of Duchess of Marlborough in her own right. Leaving no male issue, on her death, the title, conformably with the provisions of the Act of Parliament, descended to her nephew, Charles, Earl of Sunderland and Marquis of Blandford, the eldest surviving son of Anne, the second daughter of the great duke. From this nobleman the present Duke of Marlborough is descended.

CHAPTER V.

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

Swift's Character of the Duchess — Her Birth in 1660, and Private Marriage at the Age of Eighteen, to Colonel Churchill, Afterward Duke of Marlborough — Her Appointment as Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess Anne — Extract from the Duchess's Memoirs — Familiar Conversation and Correspondence between Anne and the Duchess — Extract from Colley Cibber's "Apology" — Horace Walpole's Opinion of the Duchess's Beauty — She Is Appointed by Queen Anne Groom of the Stole, Mistress of the Robes, and Keeper of the Privy Purse — Her Unbounded Influence at Court — Causes of Her Subsequent Fall — Her Insolent Bearing to the Queen — Singular Instance of It Related by Lord Dartmouth — She Is Ordered to Resign All Her Offices in the Royal Household — Extract from Harley's Letter to the Elector of Hanover — Instance of the Duke of Marlborough's Want of Self-respect — Coxe's Allusion to It in His Memoirs of the Duke — Anecdote Related by Lord Dartmouth — The Duchess's Rage and Mortification at Her Loss of Power — She Is with Difficulty Prevented from Publishing the Queen's Private Correspondence with Her — Swift's Letter to Mrs. Dingley — Memorandum by Lord Dartmouth — Singular Anecdote Related by Mrs. White — Speaker Onslow's Portrait of the Duchess — Anecdotes of Her Sarcastic Humour — Her Grandson Sues Her for His Birthright in a Court of Law — She Defends Her Own Cause in Person.

ACCORDING to Swift, and his presumption is sufficiently supported by facts, the great Duke of

Marlborough was indebted to this extraordinary woman alike for his greatness and his fall. "For above twenty years," he says, "she possessed, without a rival, the favours of the most indulgent mistress in the world, nor ever missed one single opportunity that fell in her way of improving it to her own advantage. She had preserved a tolerable court reputation with respect to love and gallantry; but three furies reigned in her breast, — the most mortal enemies of all softer passions, — which were, sordid avarice, disdainful pride, and ungovernable rage. By the last of these, often breaking out in sallies of the most unpardonable sort, she had long alienated her sovereign's mind, before it appeared to the world. This lady is not without some degree of wit, and hath in her time affected the character of it, by the usual method of arguing against religion, and proving the doctrines of Christianity to be impossible and absurd. Imagine what such a spirit, irritated by the loss of power, favour, and employment, is capable of acting or attempting, and then I have said enough." Such is the portrait drawn by Swift of the celebrated Duchess of Marlborough, — a portrait which may possibly have derived its last ungracious touch from the political acrimony of the writer, but of which the general truth appears to be as unquestionable as is its severity.

Sarah, daughter and heir of Richard Jennings,

Esq., of Sandridge, in Hertfordshire, was born in 1660, and, about the age of eighteen, became privately, it appears, the wife of John, Duke of Marlborough, then merely a colonel of dragoons. Her beauty, which surrounded her with numerous admirers, seems to have been at least equal to that of her eldest sister, Frances Jennings, one of the heroines of De Grammont, and afterward the wife of Richard Talbot, Duke of Tyrconnel.

The Duchess of Marlborough had early been selected as a playfellow of the Princess Anne, and, on the marriage of the latter with Prince George of Denmark, was appointed, at the particular desire of the princess, a lady of her bedchamber, with a salary of two hundred a year. The duchess remarks, in her memoirs: "The beginning of the princess's kindness for me had a much elder date than my entrance into her service. We had used to play together when she was a child, and she even then expressed a particular fondness for me. This inclination increased with our years. I was often at court, and the princess always honoured me with her conversation and confidence. In all her parties for amusement, I was sure to be one; and so desirous she became of having me always near her, that, upon her marriage with the Prince of Denmark in 1683, I was made one of her ladies of the bedchamber."

When the Parliament, some years afterward, settled a revenue on the princess of £50,000 a year, one of her first steps was to confer a pension of a thousand a year on her early favourite.

It was a weakness on the part of Queen Anne, — probably a natural one in a guileless and inexperienced female, — to sigh for that Utopian kind of friendship which a person in her exalted station unfortunately can never know, and which is rarely to be found but in the pages of romance. If it was a weakness to expect this pure and tender intercourse within the precincts of a court, it was a still greater weakness to select as the object of it such a person as the Duchess of Marlborough. However, it was the interest of the one to feign what the other really felt, and consequently for some years the princess appears to have been fully satisfied with the selection she had made. Thus these two women, who in any other station of life would have shunned each other from mere contrariety of tastes and opposition of character, adopted, in their conversation and epistolary correspondence a tone of sickly and maudlin sentimentalism. For some years they corresponded under the fanciful names of Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman. The duchess was Mrs. Freeman. An intercourse so irrational was conducted unquestionably with feelings of sincere though mistaken tenderness on the one side, while it seems to have excited only ridicule and contempt on the other.

It would appear by a memorandum among the papers of Carte, the historian, that it was solely owing to the advice and influence of Lady Churchill that Anne deserted her father's fortunes in 1688. Whatever truth there may be in this assertion, certain it is that the duchess was the confidante of the princess on the occasion, and also the companion of her flight. They eloped at night, as is well known, from the Cock-pit at Whitehall, and, after remaining till the next morning at the house of the Bishop of London in the city, proceeded to the seat of the Earl of Dorset at Copthall, and thence to Nottingham.

While reverting to these circumstances, we are tempted to transcribe the following passage in Colley Cibber's "Apology for His Life," a passage equally entertaining from its connection with an interesting period in our history, as from the rapturous encomiums which the writer heaps on Lady Churchill's beauty, and the enthusiasm with which in his old age he recurs to the impression it had made on him in his youth. Cibber, who by chance was at Nottingham at the period when the princess and her suite arrived in that town, thus describes one of the provincial entertainments at which, though in a very humble capacity, he was present. "The noble guests at table happening to be more in number than attendants out of livery could be found for, I, being well known in the Lord Devon-

shire's family,[1] was desired by his lordship's *maître d'hôtel* to assist at it. The post assigned me was to observe what the Lady Churchill might call for. Being so near the table, you may naturally ask me what I might have heard to have passed in conversation at it, which I should certainly tell you had I attended to above two words that were uttered there, and those were, 'some wine and water.' These, I remember, came distinguished and observed to my ear because they came from the fair guest whom I took such pleasure to wait on. Except at that single sound, all my senses were collected into my eyes, which during the whole entertainment wanted no better amusement than of stealing now and then the delight of gazing on the fair object so near me.

"If so clear an emanation of beauty, such a commanding grace of aspect, struck me into a regard that had something softer than the most profound respect in it, I cannot see why I may not without offence remember it, since beauty, like the sun, must sometimes lose its power to choose, and shine into equal warmth the peasant and the courtier. Now to give you, sir, a further proof of how good a taste my first hopeful entrance into manhood set out with, I remember, above twenty

[1] Cibber's father, the celebrated sculptor, was at this period residing in the neighbouring mansion of Chatsworth, where he was employed by the first Duke of Devonshire in beautifying his "Palace of the Peak."

Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough.

Photo-etching after the painting by Sir Peter Lely,
in the collection of the Duke of Marlborough.

years after, when the same lady had given the world four of the loveliest daughters that ever were gazed on, even after they were all nobly married and were become the reigning toasts of every party of pleasure, their still lovely mother had, at the same time, her votaries, and her health very often took the lead in those involuntary triumphs of beauty. However presumptuous or impertinent these thoughts might have appeared at my first entertaining them, why may I not hope that my having kept them decently a secret for full fifty years may be now a good round plea for their pardon." According to Horace Walpole, the beauty of the Duchess of Marlborough was always of the scornful and imperious kind. "Her features and air," he says, "announced nothing that her temper did not confirm."

On the accession of Queen Anne to the throne, the duchess reaped the full benefit of those advantages which she might fairly have anticipated from her early friendship with the new sovereign and her talent for intrigue. She was appointed groom of the stole, mistress of the robes, and keeper of the privy purse. She became the secret and almost the sole adviser of her sovereign in political as well as in private transactions; the eyes of every aspirant for court favour were fixed on her alone, and the direction of the affairs not only of England, but almost of Europe, may be said to have been vested in her hands.

Had the Duchess of Marlborough been gifted with but a small portion of discretion and prudence, she would probably have retained to the last her extraordinary influence over her royal mistress. But, unfortunately, insolence was engendered by a long series of uninterrupted success, till at last her overbearing temper and contemptuous assumption of personal superiority became too intolerant even for the yielding and timid disposition of Anne. Such was the real history of her fall, and with her fell that illustrious hero whose happiness or misfortune it was to call her his wife. Her conduct subsequently proved as intemperate in adversity as it had been insolent in prosperity, and a woman who, a few months before, had been dreaded by one half the world and envied by the other, became an object of ridicule to many, and of commiseration to all.

Horace Walpole, speaking of the terms on which the duchess lived with her royal mistress, observes: "Such was the equality produced by their intimacy, that almost the sole idea of superiority remained with her who had the advantage of personal charms, and in this there was unfortunately no comparison." The same writer informs us, that when it was the business of the duchess to hand the queen either her fan or her gloves, she used insolently to turn away her own head, as if her mistress had some "offensive smell."

An anecdote related by the Earl of Dartmouth

is even more curious. "After the battle of Blenheim," he says, "the Duchess of Marlborough thought her foundation so broad that she treated the queen with the utmost insolence and contempt. The last free conference she had with her was at Windsor, where Mrs. Danvers, who was then in waiting, told me the duchess reproached her for above an hour with her own and her family's services, in so loud and shrill a voice that the footman at the bottom of the back stairs could hear her. And all this storm was raised for the queen's having ordered a bottle of wine a day to be allowed her laundress, without having acquainted her Grace with it. The queen, seeing her so outrageous, got up to have gone out of the room; the duchess clapped her back against the door, and told her she should hear her out, for that was the least favour she could do her, in return for having set or kept the crown upon her head. As soon as she had done raging, she flounced out of the room, and said she did not care if she never saw her more; to which the queen replied, very calmly, that she thought the seldomer the better. She used to entertain her confidants with telling them what a praying, godly idiot the queen was, and was wise enough to think they would keep such a secret for her; but Lady Fitzharding,[1] who could not keep her secret in King

[1] Lord Dartmouth alludes to an expedition which was to have been set on foot against France in 1692, the success of which

William's time, was as little disposed to do it in Queen Anne's."

The duchess, though she had for some time been aware of her gradual decrease in the queen's affections, is said, as long as possible, to have kept it a secret from both her husband and the world. At length forbearance (which on the part of the queen had long amounted to positive weakness) became so utterly incompatible, not only with the maintenance of the royal dignity but with her own peace of mind, that Anne was induced to overcome her almost invincible repugnance to commotion and change, and to adopt vigorous measures for ridding herself of her tyrant. Accordingly, after the duchess had been subjected to some preliminary mortifications (which, however, were ineffectual in their intended object of forcing her to resign), it was plainly intimated to her, in the early part of 1711, that she must relinquish the whole of her numerous and lucrative offices in the royal household. Harley, afterward Earl of Oxford, writes to the Elector of Hanover, on the 19th of January, 1711: "The queen commands me to communicate to your Electoral Highness a change she has been obliged to make in her court, by removing the Duchess of Marlborough. Last night the duke brought the gold key, the ensign

depended on secrecy. The Duke of Marlborough confided the story to his wife, and the duchess to Lady Fitzharding, through whom it reached the ears of King William.

of one of his wife's places, the queen having indulged him his choice, to bring it or have it sent for. This is so far from hindering the duke from continuing in his post, that he seems resolved to accommodate himself to the queen's pleasure, and go on in her service. The causes of his lady's disgrace have been so public, and of so many years' continuance, that it will be needless to trouble your Electoral Highness on that head."

The behaviour of the Duke of Marlborough, on finding himself compelled to tender his wife's resignation, affords additional evidence of his overweening love of money, and of the tenacity with which it was in his nature to cling to any profitable post, and for a moment makes us forget the services of the hero in the failings of the man. Admitting even that the fondness with which he himself clung to office (in spite of the disgrace of his friends, and the mortifications to which he was daily subjected) was occasioned by a true regard for the interests of his country, yet the anxiety which he displayed that his duchess should continue to receive large salaries as mistress of the robes and keeper of the privy purse could have had little share in his principles of patriotism and self-denial. Instead, however, of surrendering the appointments of his duchess with a proper grace, and with those feelings of indignation which the occasion not only rendered natural but proper, he degraded himself, probably at the instigation of

his termagant wife, by descending to the most abject entreaties in his personal solicitations to the queen, with the mere selfish view of inducing her to continue his wife in her employments. The duke's conduct on this occasion seems to be a solitary instance in which (to the shame of history) his partial and voluminous biographer, Archdeacon Coxe, appears inclined to admit that his hero was at fault. After entering at some length into the details of a very humiliating interview, in which Marlborough, "in the most moving terms," implored his royal mistress to retain the duchess at least for a time about her person, "The queen," he says, "far from listening to his representations, peremptorily insisted that the gold key should be delivered to her within three days. On this the duke threw himself on his knees, and with the most moving eloquence earnestly entreated for an interval of ten days to concert some means of rendering the blow less mortifying and disgraceful. But he obtained no other answer than a positive repetition of the demand, limiting the term to the shorter space of two days." The duke, it appears, still continued to harp on the subjects of his wrongs, when Anne exclaimed, in a very peremptory manner, "I will talk of no other business till I have the key." To a repetition of such treatment, though inflicted by a woman and a queen, but few it is to be hoped would voluntarily expose themselves. Marlborough, however,

forgetting his feelings as a gentleman either in his love of lucre or fear of his wife, still continued to fawn and entreat. "He still lingered," says Coxe, "though the audience had already lasted an hour; but finding no prospect of softening his royal mistress, he took his leave, with the deepest emotions of indignation and sorrow."

Not only was the duke exposed to the mortifying reflection that he had humbled himself to no purpose, but his exertions were acknowledged in a very thankless manner by his wife. According to Lord Dartmouth, when the duchess was informed by her husband that it was altogether imperative upon her to resign the gold key, she snatched it from her side in a paroxysm of rage, and, throwing it into the middle of the apartment, told him he might take it to whom he pleased. "Lord Cowper told me," adds Lord Dartmouth, "that he went at this time to the Duke of Marlborough, and found him in bed, with a great deal of company in the chamber, and the duchess sitting at the bedside, railing in the most extravagant manner against the queen, and said she had always hated and despised her; but that fool, her daughter Henrietta (who stood by), had always loved her, and did so still, for which she should never forgive her. That surprised him very much, though he had heard more of her temper than he believed; but the duke told him he must not mind what she said, for she was used to talk at

that rate when she was in a passion, which was a thing she was very apt to fall into, and there was no way to help it."

It was in the height of her feelings of rage and mortification that the duchess expressed her determination to publish some scandalous memoirs of her own life, which should contain the numerous private and confidential letters she had received from her royal mistress. Lord Bolingbroke writes to Drummond, his confidential agent, on the 28th November, 1710: "I had almost forgot to tell you an instance of the admirable temper in which the great man is likely on his return to find his wife. Among other extravagancies, she now declares she will print the queen's letters, — letters writ whilst her Majesty had a good opinion of her, and the fondness for her, which her violent behaviour since that time has absolutely eradicated." Anne, who could not fail to be greatly hurt and alarmed at the prospect of her private feelings and weaknesses becoming the topics of public gossip, employed the Duke of Shrewsbury, in the first instance, and, subsequently, her physician, Sir David Hamilton, to endeavour to dissuade the duchess from committing so unjustifiable a breach of private confidence. The infuriated virago, however, turned a deaf ear to their entreaties, and would unquestionably have put her threat into execution, had not Sir Robert Walpole hinted to her that, in the event of her being guilty of so

gross an outrage, she would not improbably be torn in pieces by an exasperated mob.

The fear of consequences, indeed, prevented her from actually printing the proofs of the queen's weakness and of her own ingratitude, but at the same time she adopted a no less iniquitous, though a safer method of revenge, by exhibiting and descanting upon the private letters of her too indulgent mistress in every circle to which she was admitted. At length, however, another kind friend, Arthur Mainwaring, had influence enough to dissuade her from further exposing her miserable passions. He told her plainly that she injured her own character much more than that of the queen, and that the remarks of the world would be rather that Anne had been too indulgent to her, than that the queen's conduct had been either fickle, ungracious, or unkind.

But the conduct of the duchess, when compelled to resign her apartments at the palace, was even more outrageous. To the great annoyance of her husband, who was absent at the time, she caused such of the fixtures as had been put up at her own expense, including even the locks of the doors, to be removed. This conduct seems to have occasioned great annoyance to the queen; and indeed it appears, by a conversation which took place between Harley and the confidential agent of the duchess, Arthur Mainwaring, that Anne gave it as her reason for withholding her

consent to the further progress of the works at Blenheim, which had hitherto been erecting at the public expense. "The queen," writes Mainwaring to the duchess, "is so angry, that she says she will build no house for the Duke of Marlborough when the duchess has pulled hers to pieces, taken away the very slabs out of the chimneys, thrown away the keys, and said they might buy more for ten shillings, with a great deal such stuff, too impertinent to mention." Mainwaring affects to speak of these charges as the mere inventions of "lying wretches;" however, though the conduct of the duchess was, doubtless, maliciously exaggerated by Mrs. Masham and her party, there is still evidence enough, even among the Marlborough papers, to prove that the queen had sufficient cause for complaint.

Among other instances of the meanness, insolence, and ingratitude of this female fury, the following is not the least characteristic. Doctor Swift writes to Mrs. Dingley: "I dined at the lord treasurer's with his Saturday company. We had ten at table, all lords but myself and the chancellor of the exchequer. Argyle went off at six, and was in very indifferent humour, as usual. Duke of Ormond and Lord Bolingbroke were absent. I staid till near ten. Lord treasurer showed us a small picture, enamelled work, and set in gold, worth about twenty pounds, — a picture, I mean, of the queen, which she gave to

the Duchess of Marlborough, set in diamonds. When the duchess was leaving England, she took off all the diamonds, and gave the picture to one Mrs. Higgins (an old intriguing woman whom everybody knows), bidding her make the best of it she could. Lord treasurer sent to Mrs. Higgins for this picture, and gave her one hundred pounds for it. Was ever such an ungrateful beast as that duchess! or did you ever hear such a story! I suppose the Whigs will not believe it. Pray try them. She takes off the diamonds, and gives away the picture to an insignificant woman, as a thing of no consequence; and gives it to her to sell, like a piece of old-fashioned plate."

This story, of the truth of which not the shadow of a doubt can reasonably exist, is thus curiously corroborated by a memorandum of Lord Dartmouth.

"Before the Duchess of Marlborough set out for Holland, she sent to me for a pass. I sent one signed by the queen, which she returned, and sent me word, if one of my own were not sufficient, she would go without any, which I sent immediately. She made presents to all her friends, expecting, as she said, never to see them more; and chose Mrs. Higgins, a gentlewoman in low circumstances, and not much her acquaintance, to bestow an enamelled picture of the queen upon, which she had given her when princess, that had been set round with diamonds, but those her Grace

thought worth the keeping. Mrs. Higgins, who understood it was done as an affront to the queen rather than a compliment to herself, having no pretensions to such an honour, delivered it to Lord Oxford, who presented her with a hundred guineas, and kept the picture." [1]

Considering the strong sense and fine breeding of the Duke of Marlborough, we might reasonably expect that he would have viewed the conduct of his duchess in its proper light; that he would have been alive to her absurdities; and that he would have exerted his legitimate influence effectually to put a stop to her frequent and vulgar ebullitions of disappointment and rage. Had the duchess, however, been guilty of her famous impertinencies during any of the occasional absences of her husband on his career of glory, we might be inclined to attribute them to her native deficiency in common prudence, and to her domineering and ungovernable temper. But, unfortunately,

[1] Lord Dartmouth adds, in a note in another passsage in Bishop Burnet's history: "The duchess had asserted, in her memoirs, that the queen, after she came to the crown, never gave her a diamond, or anything worth taking notice of. Lord Oxford told me that, after the battle of Blenheim, the queen presented her with the Duke of Marlborough's picture, covered with a flat diamond that had brilliant edges, which cost eight thousand pounds. I myself did see, some years after the queen's death, an advertisement in the newspapers that such a diamond was in the hands of a Jew to be disposed of; therefore, I suppose her Grace may not have it by her, and has forgot it, with many other such trifles not worth taking notice of."

the duke was on the spot when these outrages occurred, and, consequently, it is impossible not to admit, either that he was devoid of all influence in his own family, or that he tacitly acquiesced in the insults offered to his sovereign.

One anecdote, in particular, affords presumptive evidence that the duke approved of his wife's intemperate conduct toward their royal mistress, and is otherwise curious, as demonstrating how entirely this great man had sunk in public opinion, at the close of the reign of Queen Anne. The anecdote in question occurs in a contemporary letter from Mrs. White to a Mr. Watson, and is apparently deserving of credit. "On the birthday of the queen," says the writer, "the Duke of Marlborough was in a chair in St. James's Park, with the curtains drawn. The mob, that believed it to be the Prince Eugene, huzzaed the chair, but the duke modestly drew back the curtains and put himself out, and with a sign showed his dislike to the salutation. The mob, finding their mistake, and that it was he, cried out, 'Stop thief,' which was a thorough mortification to him. His daughters, that day, to show their contempt of the court, were in wrapping-gowns in a window at St. James's, to see the company pass, two of them, and the other two drove through the Pall Mall four times, in the worst of mob-dress they could put themselves. The duke was in a black suit, that day, and his son-in-law, the Duke of Montague, was at court in

a plain, coarse, red coat, with a long shoulder-knot, in ridicule of the day; but the queen had the satisfaction to see the most splendid court that ever was, and crowded more than ever, by all the church, nobility, and gentry. There was a short uproar. My Lord Marlborough finds his levees much thinner than they were, and daily less and less. The people are disgusted at him."

How far the duke was personally responsible for the foolish display of pique and resentment recorded in the foregoing letters, cannot now be ascertained. It must be admitted, however, that, though to a certain degree the slave of his wife, his opinion and advice were not entirely disregarded by his turbulent duchess, nor was it till after his death that her temper became utterly unbearable.

"When she was left to herself," says Speaker Onslow, "with a mighty fortune of her own, she gave vent to all the violence of her natural temper, and her talk and actings, in the latter part of her life, were like the rage of madness, especially against the royal family and her old and best friends. She had no true wisdom or greatness of mind, and was, in truth, a very weak, passionate woman. She spoke ill, and her memoirs are very mean. I was sometimes in her favour, and I endeavoured to show her all the respect I could, for she had starts of goodness and generosity which were very commendable." Bishop Burnet, who

was remarkable for his absence of mind, being invited to dine with her shortly after her husband's disgrace, happened in the course of conversation to compare the duke to Belisarius. "But how happened it," said the duchess, "that such a man was so miserable and universally deserted?" "Ah! madam," exclaimed the bishop, unconsciously, "he had such a brimstone of a wife."

No indifferent conception of the character of the Duchess of Marlborough may be gleaned from the familiar appellations which were bestowed upon her by her contemporaries. She was usually spoken of as "Queen Sarah," and "The Viceroy," and latterly by the more homely designation of "Old Sarah."

The following anecdote affords amusing evidence of the insolence inherent in the character of the Duchess of Marlborough. When, in 1734, the Prince of Orange arrived in England for the purpose of espousing the Princess Anne, daughter of George the Second, a large boarded gallery was erected, for the convenience of the company, in the courtyard at St. James's, between the windows of the principal drawing-room and the German chapel. The ceremony being delayed in consequence of the prince being seized with illness, and the physicians ordering him to Bath for the benefit of his health, the gallery, for several weeks, was allowed to remain, darkening the windows of Marlborough House. Alluding to this circumstance,

the duchess observed, with some humour, to one of her friends: "I wonder when my neighbour George will take away his orange-chest." According to Horace Walpole, the gallery really resembled the article to which the duchess compared it.

The Duchess of Marlborough was certainly not deficient in either conversational humour or impertinent repartee. Horace Walpole observes: "She did not want that sort of wit which ill-temper, long knowledge of the world, and insolence can sharpen." Of her peculiar humour, more than one instance has been recorded. When her grandson, the Duke of Marlborough, was prevailed upon by Henry Fox, afterward the first Lord Holland, to join the court party, the duchess one day, alluding to the tempter, observed, "That was the fox that stole my goose."

Some time afterward, the young duke, wearied of his dependence on a capricious grandmother, and disgusted at her detaining from him a large sum of money which was unquestionably his rightful inheritance, was induced to sue her in a court of law for the recovery of his birthright. It was on this occasion that the duchess presented the extraordinary sight of a female advocating her own cause before a tribunal of justice, "thus," says Walpole, "treating the public with the spectacle of a woman who had held the reins of empire metamorphosed into the widow Blackacre." Her grandson, it may be observed, among other demands, had

claimed a sword set with diamonds, — a gift of the emperor to his illustrious grandfather. "I retained it," said the duchess in her defence, "lest he should pick out the diamonds and pawn them."

CHAPTER VI.

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

The Duke of Marlborough's Affectionate Letters to the Duchess — Singular Instance of His Uxoriousness — Anecdotes Illustrative of the Duchess's Violent Temper — Her Regard for the Duke's Memory — Lord Coningsby and the Duke of Somerset Become Suitors for Her Hand — Her Noble Reply to the Former — Her Daughters the Reigning Toasts of the Day — Her Dislike of the Eldest, Lady Henrietta Churchill — Lady Henrietta's Family — Account of Her Sister, Lady Anne Churchill, and of Her Family — Elizabeth, Duchess of Bridgewater, Marlborough's Third Daughter — Granger's Description of Her — Marlborough's Fourth Daughter, Lady Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montague, and Her Family — Pope's Poetical Portrait of the Duchess of Marlborough — Anecdote of Pope — Letter from Lord Bolingbroke to the Earl of Marchmont — Pope's Remark to Spence on the Duchess's Liberality — Letter from the Duchess to the Earl of Marchmont, and from Pitt to the Same — The Duchess Publishes Her Memoirs in Her Eighty-third Year — Horace Walpole's Opinion of Them — Lady Bute's Reminiscences of the Duchess — Quotation from Dryden by the Duchess — Her Disbelief in Religion — Her Letter to Lord Marchmont — Her Death in 1744.

THE letters which the Duke of Marlborough addressed to his duchess, during his foreign campaigns, exhibit in a very striking manner his regard for her person, and his respect for her capacity.

"I do assure you, upon my soul," he protests, in one of his letters, "that I had much rather the whole world should go wrong than that you should be uneasy."

After a union of nearly a quarter of a century, he speaks of her "dear letters," and adds that she is "dearer to him ten thousand times than ever she was before." He usually addresses her as "my dearest soul," and his letters not unfrequently contain almost romantic professions of attachment. On the 16th of April, 1706, he writes to her: "I am sure my dearest soul will be so just and kind to me as to believe that the greatest support I have in these troubles are, that at last I shall be relieved, with the blessing of living quietly with her which my heart longs for." Again he writes, on the 23d of the month, in the same affectionate style: "My dearest soul, my desire of being with you is so great that I am not able to express the impatience I am in to have this campaign over. I pray God it may be so happy that there may be no more occasion of my coming, but that I may ever stay with you, my dearest soul." His messages to his children are scarcely less affectionate. He writes, on one occasion, "God knows when I shall have time to write to the children, but kiss them kindly from me;" and, in a letter written some years previous, he draws the following very pleasing picture of his domestic happiness and parental affection:

"TONBRIDGE.

"You cannot imagine how I am pleased with the children; for, having nobody but their maid, they are so fond of me that, when I am at home, they will be always with me, kissing and hugging me. Their heats are quite gone, so that against you come home they will be quite in beauty. If there be room, I will come on Monday, so that you need not write on Sunday. Miss is pulling me by the arm, that she may write to her dear mamma; so that I shall say no more, only beg that you will love me always as well as I love you, and then we cannot but be happy."

And he adds, apparently to gratify the child:

"I kiss your hands, my dear mamma.

"HARRIET."

The duke, however, there is every reason to believe, was not unfrequently subjected to her disagreeable paroxysms of rage, and, moreover, seems to have stood not a little in awe of his imperious wife. "Both together," says Walpole, "her beauty and temper enslaved her heroic lord." According to that writer, the duchess was one day employed at her toilet, when, in a violent fit of rage, consequent on an altercation with her husband, she suddenly cut off her beautiful and luxuriant ringlets, and flung them in the duke's face. We have the evidence of another person that, at

the moment when this incident occurred, the duke apparently took little notice of it, and allowed the tresses to lie undisturbed on the spot where they fell. Shortly afterward, however, they were missed from the floor of her dressing-room, and for many years the duchess was left in ignorance as to their fate. Nothing further, indeed, transpired on the subject till after the duke's death, when, in a cabinet, where he preserved his most valuable effects, the duchess, to her astonishment, discovered her beautiful ringlets. According to Lady Bute, her Grace, in her old age, took great pleasure in relating this singular story, and invariably commenced weeping at its conclusion."

There is something not a little amusing in the manner in which the great Duke of Marlborough occasionally deprecates the intolerable ill-humour of his wife. In a letter to her, dated the 4th of June, 1708, he writes: "Your desire of my following lord treasurer's advice is very kind, and you may be sure as long as I think you so I shall be very desirous of living. I do not say this to flatter you, nor am I at an age of making fond expressions; but upon my word, when you are out of humour and are dissatisfied with me, I had rather die than live; so, on the contrary, when you are kind, I court of all things a quiet life with you." Even the duke's apologist, Coxe, admits that the temper of this imperious harridan embittered the last years of her henpecked but uxorious lord.

The subserviency of the great hero to his duchess was a circumstance well known to the world. Doctor Garth, the celebrated poet and physician, was one day attending the duke in a fit of sickness, when the duchess, pressing him to take some medicine, observed, with her usual warmth, "I'll be hanged if it do not prove serviceable." "Do take it, then, my lord duke," said Doctor Garth, "for it must be of service in one way or the other."

A remarkable instance of the Duchess of Marlborough's violence of temper is described as having occurred during the last illness of her husband. Doctor Mead, the eminent physician, was in attendance on the duke, when the duchess, either conceiving herself wronged by his personal manner toward herself, or deprecating his professional treatment of the duke, not only swore at him, and vented her passion in the most virulent abuse, but actually made an attempt to tear his periwig from his head. Wharton relates the story on the authority of Doctor Hoadly, Bishop of Winchester, who was a witness of the scene.

On the other hand, the duchess appears to have entertained a reverential regard for the memory of her husband, and to have displayed an honourable pride at having been the wife of so great a man. Her well-known attempts to purchase the forbearance of the writers of the period, in order to transmit his portrait in the most favourable

colours to posterity, were, perhaps, not only natural but praiseworthy. Her influence was exercised with the editors of Bishop Burnet's "History of His Own Time," to induce them to omit any objectionable matter; and when Lord Bolingbroke was left in charge of Pope's papers, we find her soliciting the suppression of any passages which might reflect on the duke. Lord Marchmont was the person to whom she applied on the occasion; and to a letter which he, in consequence, addressed to Lord Bolingbroke, the latter thus replies: "It would be a breach of that trust and confidence which Pope reposed in me, to give any one such of his papers as I think that no one should see. If there are any that may be injurious to the late duke, or to her Grace, even indirectly or covertly, as I hope there are not, they shall be destroyed; and you shall be a witness of their destruction. Copies of any such, I hope and believe, there are none abroad; and I hope the duchess will believe I scorn to keep copies when I destroy originals." Another proof of the regard and reverence with which the duchess watched over her husband's memory is afforded by the fact of her bequeathing five hundred pounds to Mallet, the editor of Lord Bolingbroke's works, and the same sum to Glover, the author of "Leonidas," as a premium for their writing the life of the duke. There is an amusing proviso in her will, that no part of it shall be written in verse. Glover, it may be remarked,

declined the task, and Mallet, it appears, never commenced the undertaking.

At the period of her husband's decease, the duchess must have attained the mature age of sixty-two. The vast wealth, however, which he had bequeathed her [1] appears, in the eyes of a host of hungry admirers, to have been regarded as a sufficient compensation for the loss of her once surpassing beauty. Among others, the Duke of Somerset and Lord Coningsby became suitors for her hand. Lord Mahon informs us that the love-letters of these noblemen are still preserved at Blenheim; and, indeed, he has favoured us with an amusing specimen of one of their effusions. "To my dearest, dearest Lady Marlborough alone," writes Coningsby, "I could open the inmost thoughts of my loaded heart, and by her exalted wisdom find relief. Whither to go, or how to dispose of a life devoted to you, I know not till I receive your orders and commands. I live in hopes that the great and glorious Creator of the

[1] In the reign of Queen Anne, the duke's share of the public money, derived from various places and pensions, amounted at one period to the enormous annual sum of £54,825; in addition to which wealth, the duchess enjoyed other places and pensions, the annual amount of which was £9,500. No wonder, with their mutual habits of penuriousness, and after half a century of saving, that the duchess should have found herself the richest subject in Europe, or that she should have been able to affect the common rate of interest, a circumstance which was indisputably the fact.

world, who does and must direct all things, will direct you to make me the happiest man upon the face of the earth, and will enable me to make my dearest, dearest Lady Marlborough, as she is the wisest and best, the happiest of all women." "This effusion," remarks Lord Mahon, "was written only six months after her husband's decease. But both to Coningsby and Somerset the duchess replied with a noble and becoming spirit. She declared that if she were only thirty, instead of sixty, she would not allow even the emperor of the world to succeed in that heart which had been devoted to John, Duke of Marlborough."

Of the four beautiful daughters of the Duchess of Marlborough, circumstances render it necessary to say a few words. They were, in their time, as Colley Cibber describes them, "the reigning toasts of every party of pleasure," and the fame of their surpassing loveliness has scarcely yet faded in the eyes of posterity.

Lady Henrietta Churchill, the eldest daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, was born on the 19th of July, 1682, and married in 1698, at the age of sixteen, Francis, second Earl of Godolphin, a bridegroom of twenty.[1] On the

[1] Francis, second Earl of Godolphin, was born 3d of September, 1678. In the lifetime of his father, he represented the county of Oxford, and in the reign of Queen Anne was appointed cofferer to that princess, and lord warden of the stannaries. In 1723 he was appointed groom of the stole and first gentleman of the bedchamber to George the First, and the same

death of her father, in 1720, she succeeded, agreeably with the provisions of an act of Parliament, as Duchess of Marlborough in her own right. She continued to the last on the worst terms with her imperious mother, the latter apparently neglecting no single occasion of displaying her contempt and dislike of her beautiful daughter. Horace Walpole says: "Her eldest daughter and she were long at variance, and were never reconciled. When the younger duchess exposed herself by placing a monument and silly epitaph, of her own composition and bad spelling, to Congreve, in Westminster Abbey, her mother, quoting the words, said, 'I know not what pleasure she might have in his company, but I am sure it was no honour.'"[1] The duchess died on the 24th of October,

year was constituted one of the lords justices during the temporary absence of the king in his German dominions. In 1733 he was appointed Governor of the Scilly Islands, and some time afterward filled the office of lord privy seal. He died 17th of January, 1766.

[1] The inscription, as it appears in Westminster Abbey, is as follows: "Mr. William Congreve died January the 19th, 1728, aged fifty-six, and was buried near this place, to whose most valuable memory this monument is set up by Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, as a mark how dearly she remembers the happiness and honour she enjoyed in the sincere friendship of so worthy and honest a man, whose virtue, candour, and wit gained him the love and esteem of the present age, and whose writings will be the admiration of the future." Congreve bequeathed the bulk of his fortune (which, according to Doctor Johnson, amounted to abont ten thousand pounds) to the duchess, which the latter repaid by a magnificent funeral and a grate-

1733, at Harrow-on-the-Hill, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. She was succeeded in the Dukedom of Marlborough by her nephew, Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland.

Lady Anne Churchill, the second daughter of the Duchess of Marlborough, became the wife of Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland. Walpole describes her as the most beautiful of her four charming daughters. She was somewhat short in stature, a great politician, and was generally known by the familiar appellation of the "Little Whig." Colley Cibber informs us that when Sir John Vanburgh's theatre was commenced in the Haymarket,[1] this remarkable title

ful epitaph. The following note which she addressed to the Hon. George Berkeley, inviting him to be one of the six pall-bearers at Congreve's funeral, shows how anxious she was to honour the memory of her deceased friend:

"SIR: — I must desire you to be one of the six next Sunday upon this very melancholy occasion. I always used to think you had a respect for him, and I would not have any there that had not. I am, etc., MARLBOROUGH."

The pall-bearers were the Duke of Bridgewater, the Earl of Godolphin, Lord Cobham, Lord Wilmington, the Hon. George Berkeley, and Brigadier-General Churchill. Congreve's body was removed to the Jerusalem Chamber in Westminster Abbey, where it lay in state on the 26th of January; and the same evening, between the hours of nine and ten, was carried, with great solemnity, to Henry the Seventh's Chapel, where the funeral service was performed; after which it was buried in the south transept of the Abbey.

[1] This theatre was destroyed, about half a century since, by fire.

was engraved on the foundation-stone, out of compliment to the beautiful politician. Like her mother, Lady Sunderland was celebrated for the extreme beauty of her hair, and used, while combing it, to receive such men at her toilet as she wished to bring over to her political way of thinking. It has been remarked, as a rather singular circumstance in the history of Lady Sunderland, that she was the daughter of a duke, the sister of a duchess in her own right, and mother of a duke, and yet never herself attained any higher rank than that of a countess.

Lady Sunderland was the mother of Charles, who succeeded as second Duke of Marlborough. In his youth, he had been an especial favourite with his grandmother, but on his succeeding to the Marlborough titles and estates, money — which, unfortunately, is so often the promotor of family dissensions — entirely destroyed the harmony of their intercourse. "He had good sense," says Horace Walpole, "infinite generosity, and no more economy than was to be expected of a young man of warm passions and such vast expectations. He was modest and diffident, too, but could not digest total dependence on a capricious and avaricious grandmother." Both the duke and his brother John (or, as the latter was familiarly termed, "Jack Spencer") were remarkable for their wild frolics and careless profusion. They are said to have made it a general rule

"never to dirty their fingers with silver;" and, accordingly, in the streets of London, fights were not at all unfrequent among the hackney-chairmen, who naturally coveted the honour of carrying them, or, rather, the guinea which was certain to be their reward. The wildness and prodigality of the elder brother not unfrequently excited the sarcasm of his grandmother; while the faults of the younger one appear to have been entirely overlooked in the personal favour with which she regarded him.

The old Duchess of Marlborough seems to have conceived a particular dislike to Lady Sunderland's eldest daughter, Lady Bateman. From Lady Bute we learn that this lady "inherited such a share of her grandmother's imperious spirit as to match her pretty fairly, and to ensure daggers-drawing as soon as it should find time and opportunity to display itself." "Lady Bateman," says Walpole, "had the intriguing spirit of her father and grandfather, Earls of Sunderland. She was connected with Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland, and both had great influence over the Duke of Marlborough.[1] What an object would it be with Fox to convert to the court so great a subject as the duke! Nor was it much less important to his sister to give him a wife, who, with no reasons for expectation of such shining fortune,

[1] Charles, the second Duke of Marlborough.

should owe the obligation to her. Lady Bateman struck the first stroke, and persuaded her brother to marry a handsome young lady, who, unluckily, was daughter of Lord Trevor,[1] who had been a bitter enemy of his grandfather, the victorious duke. The grandam's rage exceeded all bounds. Having a portrait of Lady Bateman, she blackened the face, and wrote on it: 'Now her outside is as black as her inside.' The duke she turned out of the little lodge in Windsor Park; and then, pretending that the new duchess and her female cousins, eight Trevors, had stripped the house and garden, she had a puppet show made with waxen figures, representing the Trevors tearing up the shrubs, and the duchess carrying off the chicken-coop under her arm." The story of the old duchess disfiguring the portrait of Lady Bateman is related, though with some slight difference, by Lady Bute. "She had the face blackened over, and this sentence, 'She is much blacker within,' inscribed in large characters on the frame. And thus, placed in her usual sitting-room, it was exhibited to all beholders."

The third daughter of the great Duke of Marl-

[1] Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas, second Baron Trevor, was married to Charles, second Duke of Marlborough, 23d of May, 1732. She died 7th of October, 1761, leaving issue five children, among whom were George, third Duke of Marlborough, and the celebrated Lady Diana Beauclerk, married first to Frederick, Viscount Bolingbroke, and afterward, on her marriage being dissolved, to the Hon. Topham Beauclerk.

borough was Elizabeth, born in 1687, and married to Scroop Egerton, first Duke of Bridgewater. Pope has celebrated her in a well-known couplet:

> "Hence beauty waking, all her forms supplies,
> An angel's sweetness and Bridgewater's eyes."

"Her face," says Granger, "had she had no extraordinary animation, would have been conspicuous for its symmetry and complexion; but heightened by modesty, sensibility, and sweetness, it became in the highest degree attractive." "She was a woman," says Archdeacon Coxe, "imbued with a deep sense of religion, and endeared to her husband and parents by her mild, affectionate, and dutiful demeanour." The Duchess of Bridgewater died on the 22d of March, 1714, at the early age of twenty-five. Her loss was bewailed by Pope, in verses little creditable to his own genius, and unworthy the occasion which gave rise to them:

> "Muse, at that name thy sacred sorrows shed,
> Those tears eternal that embalm the dead;
> Call round her tomb each object of desire,
> Each purer frame informed with purer fire;
> Bid her be all that cheers or softens life,
> The tender sister, daughter, friend, and wife;
> Bid her be all that makes mankind adore,
> Then view this marble, and be vain no more."

The fourth and youngest daughter of the Duke of Marlborough was Lady Mary Churchill, born

in 1689, and married in 1709 to John, second Duke of Montague.[1] She is the "angel goddess Montague" of Pope, and was one of the ladies of the bedchamber to the queen of George the Second. In many points of character, she is said to have resembled her celebrated mother. The great Duke of Marlborough once remarked to them: "I wonder you cannot agree, you are so alike." The Duchess of Montague died on the 14th of May, 1751.

The Duchess of Manchester,[2] daughter of the

[1] This nobleman held several important situations during the reign of George I., and was, also, in some degree of favour with George II., at whose coronation he carried the sceptre with the cross in the procession. His mother-in-law says of him: "All his talents lie in things only natural in boys of fifteen years old, and he is about two-and-fifty; to get people into his garden and wet them with squirts, and to invite people to his country-houses, and put things into their beds to make them itch, and twenty such pretty fancies like these." If a love, however, of a practical joke be a crime, the Duke of Montague at least made some amends for his iniquities by his vast benevolence and extensive charities. "They will be remembered," says Lord Hailes, "while there is any tradition of human kindness and charity in England."

[2] There is rather an interesting notice of the Duchess of Manchester in one of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters. Lady Mary, writing to her sister, the Countess of Mar, observes: "The people I live most with are none of your acquaintance, the Duchess of Montague excepted, whom I continue to see often. Her daughter Belle is at this instant in the paradisaical state of receiving visits every day from a passionate lover, who is her first love; whom she thinks the finest gentleman in Europe, and is, besides that, Duke of Manchester. Her mamma and I often laugh and sigh, reflecting on her felicity, the consummation of

Duchess of Montague, is said to have been a great favourite with her imperious grandmother. The latter one day said to her: "Duchess of Manchester, you are a good creature, and I love you mightily; but you have a mother." The Duchess of Manchester, who is said to have been high-spirited as she was amiable, immediately retorted: "Yes! and she has a mother." But we must return to a more celebrated character, the Duchess of Marlborough herself, of whom our notices are fast drawing to a close.

Although the verses, in which Pope has drawn the portrait of this famous woman, are sufficiently well known, it may not be amiss to repeat them for the convenience of the reader:

"But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
Scarce once herself, by turns all womankind;
Who with herself, or others, from her birth
Finds all her life one warfare upon earth;

which will be in a fortnight. In the meantime, they are permitted to be alone together every day." Isabella, Duchess of Manchester, was considered one of the most beautiful women of her time. On the death of her first husband, William, second Duke of Manchester, in 1739, she remarried Edward Hussey, Esq., an Irish gentleman, who took the name of Montague, and was afterward created Lord Beaulieu. The charming indifference with which she wore her widowhood, as well as her foolish marriage with a stalwart but impoverished Irishman, are ridiculed by Sir Charles H. Williams, in two of the best known of his poetical productions, "Isabella, or the Morning," and the "Ode to the Honourable Henry Fox." The duchess died in 1786, at the age of ninety-four.

Shines in exposing knaves, and painting fools,
Yet is whate'er she hates or ridicules.
No thought advances, but her eddy brain
Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
Full sixty years the world has been her trade,
The wisest fool much time has ever made.
From loveless youth to unrespected age,
No passion gratified except her rage;
So much the fury still outran the wit,
The pleasure miss'd her, and the scandal hit.
Who breaks with her, provokes revenge from hell, —
But he's a bolder man who dares be well.
Her every turn with violence pursu'd,
No more a storm her hate than gratitude:
To that each passion turns, or soon or late, —
Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate.
Superiors? death! and equals? what a curse!
But, an inferior not dependant! worse.
Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live:
But die, and she'll adore you — then the bust
And temple rise — then fall again to dust.
Last night, her lord was all that's good and great, —
A knave this morning, and his will a cheat.
Strange! by the means defeated of the ends,
By spirit robb'd of power, by warmth of friends,
By wealth of followers! without one distress
Sick of herself, through very selfishness!
Atossa, cursed with every granted prayer,
Childless with all her children, wants an heir.
To heirs unknown descends the unguarded store,
Or wanders, heaven-directed, to the poor!"

According to Spence, these lines were read by Bishop Warburton, at different times, both to the

Duchess of Marlborough and the Duchess of Buckingham. The latter instantly discarded the presumption that they were intended for herself; but the former, in speaking of the verses sometime afterward, observed that she knew well enough who was meant. The truth of this anecdote is corroborated both by Horace Walpole and by Doctor Wharton. "These lines," says the latter, "were shown to her Grace, as if they were intended for the portrait of the Duchess of Buckingham; but she soon stopped the person who was reading them, — as the Duchess of Portland informed me, — and called out aloud, 'I cannot be so imposed upon; I see plainly enough for whom they are designed,' and abused Pope most plentifully on the subject; though she was afterward reconciled to him, and courted him."

Pope, as is well known, received a thousand pounds from the Duchess of Marlborough for suppressing this celebrated "character," and yet, though he took the bribe, he afterward had the meanness to give the verses to the world. They were first printed in a folio sheet, in 1746, shortly after the death of the duchess, and were subsequently inserted in his "Moral Essays." In reference to Pope's conduct on this occasion, which Doctor Wharton justly stigmatises as "the greatest blemish on his moral character," we are inclined to insert the following curious letter addressed by

Lord Bolingbroke to Hugh, Earl of Marchmont, shortly after the death of the poet:

"Monday morning.

"Our friend Pope, it seems, corrected and prepared for the press, just before his death, an edition of the four epistles that follow the "Essay on Man." They were then printed off, and are now ready for publication. I am sorry for it, because, if he could be excused for writing the character of Atossa formerly, there is no excuse for his design of publishing it after he had received the favour you and I know; and the character of Atossa is inserted. I have a copy of the book. Warburton has the propriety of it, as you know. Alter it he cannot, by the terms of the will. Is it worth while to suppress the edition? or should her Grace's friends say, as they may from several strokes in it, that it was not intended to be her character? and should she despise it? If you come over hither, we may talk better than write on the subject. Adieu, my dear lord."

Whatever may have been the secret of Pope's malignity, there is a passage in one of the letters of this great poet, but vain man, which insinuates a very different kind of feeling on the part of the duchess toward himself. He writes to Swift, on the 17th of May, 1739: "The Duchess of Marlborough makes great court to me; but I am too

old for her, mind and body." It is scarcely possible to mistake the impression intended to be conveyed by this passage. The duchess, however, was at this period in her eightieth year.

Her avarice and love of money almost surpassed the same vices in her husband. "Her Grace and the duke," says Lord Dartmouth, "had, together, above ninety thousand pounds a year salary, besides whatever else they pleased for themselves and the rest of their family; and had the insolence, as well as meanness, to refuse to pay anything toward the tax upon Whitehall, which, being a sum certain, the rest of the queen's servants were obliged to pay it for them. They used everything that belonged to the queen as if it had been their own; and the very linen that went with him every year to the army was furnished by her Majesty."[1] The duchess, however, could occasionally be not only liberal, but munificent, and Pope himself admitted, in conversation with Spence, that she had given away in her lifetime, in charities and presents to grandchildren and other relatives, nearly three hundred thousand pounds. To Hooke alone she presented the large sum of five thousand pounds for his vindication of her charac-

[1] Among other sources from which the Duke of Marlborough derived his immense wealth, may be mentioned his speculations in the celebrated South Sea scheme, which subsequently ruined half the nation, though it enriched himself. The duchess persuaded her husband to sell out at a favourable crisis, by which means he realised the vast sum of £100,000.

ter. This, for a time, attached him to her service, but she, shortly afterward, took occasion to quarrel with him, —

> "Her every turn by violence pursued,
> Not more a storm her hate than gratitude."

Thus Hooke represented the secret of their rupture. The reason, however, which the duchess gave of her sudden dislike to him was his attempting to convert her to the Roman Catholic religion.[1]

That the duchess could be liberal when it suited her, is evident from the following very creditable letter which this singular compound of parsimony and munificence addressed to Hugh, Earl of Marchmont:

"Wednesday, one o'clock.

"I am but just awake and they bring me the melancholy message your lordship sent me of poor Lord Marchmont,[2] which, as he has been so long ill, I am not so much surprised at as I am sorry; and I really think, in so disagreeable a world as this is, since the stroke must be given some time or other, when it is over it is better for those that are gone, than for friends that remain after them. Your lordship will remember that I had a great

[1] According to Wharton, Hooke was a Mystic, a Quietist, and a warm disciple of Fenelon.

[2] Alexander, Earl of Marchmont, died in February, 1740.

mind once to have given you my legacy, which I had desired you to accept at my death, in my lifetime, which I thought was not improper; but I found you did not like it, and, therefore, I dropped it; but now I hope you will not take it ill, since I believe upon this sad occasion you may want money immediately, that I offer to send you a thousand pounds, which is half the legacy; and, if you please, you may call it so much money lent, to which I can see no manner of objection; and, if it be of the least use to you, it will very much oblige me, who am, and ever shall be, with the greatest esteem imaginable, your lordship's most faithful, and most humble servant,

"S. MARLBOROUGH."

To William Pitt, afterward the celebrated Earl of Chatham, she bequeathed a legacy of ten thousand pounds. Pitt, in acknowledging the favour, writes as follows, to Hugh, Earl of Marchmont, one of her Grace's executors:

"BATH, 22d October, 1744.

"MY LORD:—Give me leave to return your lordship my thanks for the obliging manner in which you do me the honour to inform me of the Duchess of Marlborough's great goodness to me. The sort of regard I feel for her memory, I leave to your lordship's heart to suggest to you; besides the many reasons there are for bearing

that regard to it, I hope you have likewise some of the same, which she has been pleased to honour me with. This, and every other thing, that can add any advantage to your situation, I very truly wish you; and am, my lord, your lordship's most faithful and most humble servant.

"W. PITT."

The duchess also bequeathed £200,000 to the Earl of Chesterfield as a reward of his continued opposition to the court. "She was scarcely cold, however," says Walpole, "before he returned to the king's service."

In 1742, when in her eighty-third year, the duchess published her celebrated memoirs,[1] — a work which was intended to vindicate her character in the eyes of future generations, but which has, unquestionably, produced the contrary effect. That the work is by no means deficient, either in interest or in literary merit, cannot be denied. But, on the other hand, the fact of its being a mere *ex-parte* statement; the malignity with which the duchess attacks the memory of the dead; the use and adoption of vulgar nicknames; the revival of old feuds and forgotten jealousies; and the mere

[1] "An Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, from her first coming to Court to the year 1710. In a letter from Herself to my Lord ——." It was speedily retorted upon by a volume double its size, entitled, "The Other Side of the Question," a work possessing little interest and less merit.

act of wantonly publishing the private letters of her sovereign and benefactress, sufficiently lay bare the base heart, the prejudiced feelings, and violent character of the writer.

"This favourite duchess," says Horace Walpole, "who, like the proud Duke of Espernon, lived to brave the successors in a court where she had domineered, wound up her capricious life, where it seems she had begun it, with an apology for her conduct. The piece, though weakened by the prudence of those who were to correct it, though maimed by her Grace's own corrections, and though great part of it is rather the annals of a wardrobe than of a reign, yet has still curious anecdotes, and a few of those sallies of wit which fourscore years of arrogance could not fail to produce in so fantastic an understanding. And yet, by altering her memoirs as often as her will, she disappointed the public as much as her own family. However, the chief objects remain, and one sees exactly how Europe and the Back-stairs took their places in her imagination and in her narrative. The revolution left no impression on her mind but of Queen Mary turning up bed-clothes; and the Protestant hero, but of a selfish glutton who devoured a dish of peas from his sister-in-law. Little circumstances, indeed, convey the most characteristic ideas, but the choice of them may as often paint the genius of the writer as of the person represented."

Burnet observes of the duchess, that she possessed "a clear apprehension and a true judgment." He admits, however, that she had little learning, and her "judgment" appears equally questionable. The duchess herself informs us, in her memoirs, that in her youth she "never read," and that her only employment was playing at cards. "She was a woman," says Doctor Johnson, in his life of Addison, "without skill, or pretension to skill, in poetry or literature;" and he elsewhere observes in regard to the incense offered up to her family by the poets: "It could be prompted only by respect or kindness, for neither the duke nor duchess desired the praise or liked the cost of patronage." And yet we find Addison dedicating his opera of "Rosamond" to the duchess, and Barnes inscribing an edition of Anacreon to the duke.

To the Countess of Bute, the granddaughter of the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, we are indebted for some interesting reminiscences of the Duchess of Marlborough at the close of her long life. Lady Bute described her as still retaining considerable remains of beauty, and as being remarkable for the most expressive eyes, and the "finest hair imaginable." It was by the use of honey-water, as the duchess herself told Lady Bute, that she retained the colour of the latter unchanged. Lady Bute appears to have been a great favourite with the old duchess, and was

admitted to her at all hours. She frequently sat by her when she dined, and, when a child, used to watch her casting up her complicated accounts. The latter, according to Lady Bute, was a strange process. The duchess, who knew nothing of figures, is described as devising an arithmetic of her own, setting down figures, apparently at random, as if a child were scribbling over the paper, yet clearly seeing her way through the heterogeneous mass, and, in the end, reducing everything right, even to a fraction. In addition to these circumstances, Lady Bute informs us that the old duchess was extremely communicative, and, it need scarcely be added, proportionably entertaining.

The conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough, when suffering under the inflictions of disease and old age, presents a pleasing contrast to the insufferable insolence and worldliness of her former career.

In a letter to the Earl of Marchmont, dated the 31st of December, 1735, she thus alludes to her increasing infirmities: "I have had the gout lately, but not much pain; but my limbs are weaker than they were, and at my age I cannot expect to continue long, nor have I anything now left to make me desirous of it. I fear my ridiculous hand will give you some trouble to read, but you will pardon the faults that I cannot help, and believe that, as long as I live, you will have a most

faithful and most humble servant, who has the greatest value imaginable for your merit.

"S. MARLBOROUGH."

In a curious little work, the "Opinions of the Duchess of Marlborough," the duchess herself has thrown some further light on the state of her feelings and prospects at the close of her long and checkered life. "I would desire," she says, in 1736, "no more pleasure than to walk about my gardens and parks; but alas! that is not permitted; for I am generally wrapped up in flannel, and wheeled up and down my rooms in a chair. I cannot be very solicitous for life upon such terms, when I can only live to have more fits of the gout." Again, she writes, the following year: "I am a perfect cripple, and cannot possibly hold out long, and, as I have little enjoyment of my life, I am very indifferent about it. It is impossible that one of my age and infirmities can live long, and one great happiness there is in death is, that one shall never hear any more of anything they do in this world:

"'When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat.
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit.
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay;—
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies more, and when it says we shall be blest
With some new joy, cuts off what we possessed.
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure from what still remain;

And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the fresh sprightly running could not give:
I'm tired with waiting for this chemic gold,
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.'

Verses of Dryden, which I think very pretty, and which most people have felt the truth of. I think one can't leave the world in a better time than now, when there is no such thing as real friendship, truth, justice, honour, or, indeed, anything that is agreeable in life."

The duchess, "after sixty years of arrogance," to use the expression of Horace Walpole, became bedridden, a misfortune, however, which appears to have been sustained by her with at least decent resignation. Indeed, the insolence which she had exhibited in the early part of her career appears, in a certain degree, to have been atoned for by the equanimity which she subsequently displayed under the pressure of disease, and with the prospect of approaching dissolution.

Unfortunately, the Duchess of Marlborough was a disbeliever in, if not a scoffer at, religion. Swift, alluding to her character for wit, observes that she "affected it by the usual methods of arguing against religion, and proving the doctrines of Christianity to be impossible and absurd." She herself writes to the Earl of Marchmont, on the 3d of March, 1742: "I find you are as ignorant what the soul is as I am. But though none of my philosophers demonstrate plainly that, I do

think there must be rewards and punishments after this life; and I have read lately in some of my dear friends, the philosophers, that there was an opinion that the soul never died; that it went into some other man or beast. And that seems, in my way of thinking, to be on the side of the argument for the immortality of the soul; and though the philosophers prove nothing, to my understanding certain, yet I have a great mind to believe that kings' and first ministers' souls, when they die, go into chimney-sweepers. And their punishment is, that they remember they were great monarchs, were complimented by the Parliament upon their great abilities, and thanked for the great honour they did nations in accepting of the crown, at the same time that they endeavoured to starve them, and were not capable of doing them the least service, though they gave them all the money in the nation." Thus, at the age of eighty-two, could this extraordinary woman renew the prejudices of her youth, and thus sarcastically could she recur to the causes of those disappointments, which the lapse of nearly half a century might have been expected to have erased. In perusing her contemptuous remarks on "kings and first ministers," it is impossible not to perceive that disappointed ambition was the true secret of the abuse; and that the dislike with which she had been regarded by King William, the withdrawal from her of Queen Anne's favour, and the neglect

which she had experienced from the first and second George, continued to embitter the cup of life even to its dregs.

> "Grief aids disease, remembered folly stings,
> And her last sighs reproach the faith of kings."

We find Horace Walpole writing to Sir Horace Mann, as early as the 10th of December, 1741: "Old Marlborough is dying; but who can tell! Last year she had lain a great while ill without speaking; her physicians said: 'She must be blistered, or she will die.' She called out: 'I won't be blistered, and I won't die.' If she takes the same resolution now, I don't believe she will." The duchess, it may be remarked, survived the date of this letter nearly four years. She expired at Marlborough House, on the 18th of October, 1744, at the age of eighty-four. Her body was interred in the chapel at Blenheim, in the same vault to which the remains of her husband had previously been transferred from Westminster Abbey.

CHAPTER VII.

JOHN SHEFFIELD, DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

The Duke's Intellectual Character Defined — His Birth — Early Habits of Study, and Subsequent Love of Pleasure — A Volunteer in the First Naval War with the Dutch in 1666 — Attempts to Take His Seat in the House of Lords, but Objected to, on Account of His Being under Age — Obtains the Favour of Charles the Second and His Courtiers, and Befriends the Poet Dryden — Appointed Gentleman of the Bedchamber — Serves a Campaign under Turenne — Pays His Addresses to Princess Anne — Volunteers to Command the Forces Despatched to the Relief of Tangier — Curious Anecdote — Sworn of the Privy Council on the Accession of James the Second — Anecdote of the Duke and King William — The Duke's Noble Conduct during the London Riots — Gives in His Adhesion to King William — Created Marquis of Normanby — Created by Queen Anne Duke of Buckinghamshire — His Vexation at the Honours Heaped on the Duke of Marlborough — His Infidelity and Superstition — His Character as a Poet — Neglected by George the Second — Spring Macky's Character of the Duke — His Three Marriages — Death in 1721 — His Epitaph on Himself.

JOHN SHEFFIELD, Duke of Buckingham, like many other persons of high rank who have attempted either to instruct or amuse the world, is indebted, for his literary reputation, rather to his exalted position in society, than to the display

of any unusual degree of talent. According to Horace Walpole, he wrote in hopes of being confounded with his predecessor in the title, the witty George Villiers; but, in the words of that sarcastic writer, "He would more easily have been mistaken for the other Buckingham if he had never written at all." Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, however, appears to have had some claims to conversational wit; and, though he never attained to intellectual preëminence, has at least the merit of being superior to the herd of courtiers and coxcombs of the day, with whom it was his lot to associate. He exhibited on all occasions the highest respect for literature, both by the eagerness with which he courted literary distinction and by the patronage which he extended to others.

The subject of the present memoir was the only son of Edmund Sheffield, second Earl of Mulgrave, by Lady Elizabeth Cranfield, daughter of Lionel, Earl of Middlesex. He was born in 1649, and on the death of his father, in 1658, succeeded, at the age of nine years, to the Earldom of Mulgrave. Following the custom of young men of family, he commenced his travels on the Continent at an early age. Unlike his young contemporaries, however, he denied himself to his acquaintances during several hours of each day; and, with a laudable strength of mind, not only avoided the pleasures natural to his age, but applied himself cheerfully and diligently to his studies. Afterward, however,

he became quite as much distinguished for his admiration of women and his love of pleasure, as he had formerly been for his predilection in favour of retirement and books.

The same ambition which had prompted him to seek distinction in the paths of literature appears to have subsequently induced him to enlist himself as an adventurer in the field of arms. In the first naval war with the Dutch, in 1666, he went to sea as a volunteer at the age of seventeen, and had the fortune to serve in the same ship with Prince Rupert and the celebrated Duke of Albemarle, who at this period shared the command of the fleet. At the close of this service, his military ardour still raging, he obtained the command of one of the volunteer troops of horse, which, in consequence of the threatened invasion of the Dutch, were at this period quartered over the kingdom. At the next meeting of Parliament, he proposed to take his seat in the House of Lords, but Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, opposing his admission in consequence of his being under age, he was compelled for a time to forego the honour.

It was about this period, as he himself informs us, that he began to follow the allurements of pleasure with "too much eagerness." He grew into high favour with Charles the Second and his gay courtiers; became a friend of the wits; and imbibing the spirit of the circles to which he was

admitted, became a freethinker in religion, and a prostituter of the muse. He is entitled to the merit, however, of having about the same time courted the friendship and relieved the distresses of the immortal Dryden. The great poet says, in dedicating to him his tragedy of "Aurenge-Zebe," "I am sure you will more easily permit me to be silent in the care you have taken of my fortune, which you have rescued, not only from the power of others, but from my worst of enemies, my own modesty and laziness."

At the breaking out of the second Dutch war, in 1672, the young lord again went to sea, and behaved with so much credit at the battle of Solebay that he shortly afterward obtained the command of the *Royal Katherine*, a ship which, he himself informs us, was considered the best second-rate in the service. Two years after, on the 29th of May, 1674, he was honoured with the Order of the Garter, and about the same time was appointed gentleman of the bedchamber to Charles the Second. He subsequently entered the French service. He served a campaign under the celebrated Marshal Turenne, and, returning to England in 1679, was appointed, on the disgrace of the Duke of Monmouth, Lord-Lieutenant of the county of York, and Governor of Hull.

It was at this period that Buckingham is said to have aspired to the hand of, and to have paid his addresses to, the Princess Anne, afterward Queen

of England. This circumstance is openly hinted at by Mrs. Manley in her scandalous "Memoirs," and Boyer observes, in his "History of Queen Anne," that though the duke's addresses to her were checked as soon as discovered, yet that the princess "ever had an esteem for him." "His presumption," says John Macky, "made him make love to the Princess Anne (now queen), for which he left the kingdom; but soon after returned, and was made lord chamberlain by King James."

These ambitious projects are said very nearly to have cost Buckingham his life. Having volunteered to command the forces despatched for the relief of Tangier, we are assured that he was purposely sent to sea in a leaky ship, with the view of keeping him out of the way of the princess. The narrator of this strange story informs us that it was entirely owing to the favourable state of the weather, and to the pumps being kept constantly at work, that the duke reached his destination in safety. He adds, moreover, that although the duke's nice sense of honour made him persist in proceeding to sea, notwithstanding the imminent danger to which he knew he would be exposed, yet that he did his utmost to dissuade others from accompanying him. Many of his friends are said to have followed his advice. Among those, however, who had originally proposed to attend him, but who still thought it incumbent upon them to keep their word, was the Earl of Plymouth, a nat-

ural son of Charles the Second, usually styled by his contemporaries "Don Carlos." During the voyage, one of the company remarking that they had, hitherto, neglected to drink the king's health, notwithstanding there was one of his Majesty's sons on board, "I know it well," said the duke, "but we must first get out of this rotten ship, before I can make the health go merrily round." They reached Tangier in safety, but the Moors retreating on the first approach of the English army, it was not the fault of the gallant adventurers that they gained but little honour by the expedition.

On the accession of James the Second to the throne, the duke was almost immediately sworn of the Privy Council, and shortly afterward was appointed lord chamberlain of the household. He went all lengths with his unfortunate master, and even consented to sit on the illegal and infamous Ecclesiastical Commission. Walpole says, "He ridiculed King James's religion, although he attended him to his chapel;" nevertheless, though he frequented, and knelt to the mass, at the king's desire, he is said, by his frequent and urgent remonstrances with his royal master in private, to have latterly declined in his affection and esteem. There seems to have existed an intention, during the latter part of King James's reign, of tampering with the duke's loyalty, and inviting him to join the cause of the Prince of Orange. King William,

after his elevation to the throne, inquired of him: "Pray, my lord, what would you have done, if my agent had acquainted you with the whole business?" The honourable reply was: "I should have discovered it to the master I then served." The king added: "I could not have blamed you."

During that period of the revolution of 1688, when an infuriated London mob were perpetrating the most wanton acts of mischief and pillage, the duke distinguished himself by an act of promptitude and kindness which does him much credit. The rabble (at the period of the king's first flight) having rased the house of the Spanish ambassador to the ground, the duke, conceiving, very properly, that the honour of the nation was at stake, took upon himself, notwithstanding the offence which it seemed likely to give to the popular party, to invite the ambassador to Whitehall, and to order a splendid table to be kept for him twice a day; moreover, he directed that the yeomen of the guard should attend constantly in the outer chamber, — a ceremony which had hitherto only been used toward the king's person. For this generous, though unauthorised stretch of authority, he informs us that he was so far from being blamed that he was afterward fortunate enough to receive the thanks both of King James and the Prince of Orange, for the care which he had taken of the ambassador's person and of the national honour.

It was not till the cause of King James appeared to be utterly hopeless that the duke offered his services to the Prince of Orange. On the first day that he paid his respects to the invader, — while waiting in the antechamber for his turn of admission, — Bentinck, afterward Earl of Portland, observing him without his staff of lord chamberlain, observed: "*Comment, mi Lord, vous avez quitté vôtre bâton?*" "*Il est bien temps,*" was the ready reply.

A considerable time elapsed after the accession of King William before the duke derived any advantage from his adhesion to the government of that monarch. However, on the 10th of May, 1674, he was created Marquis of Normanby, in the county of Lincoln, and shortly afterward was admitted to the Privy Council, besides having a pension conferred on him of three thousand a year.

On the accession of Queen Anne, — to whose hand he had formerly aspired, — he received the reward of his early devotion and of his former real or pretended regard for her person. Indeed, the numerous favours which she conferred on him gave strength to the supposition that she was not altogether insensible to the homage which he had paid to her in her youth. Waiting on her immediately after King William died, the queen happened to make some remark on the exceeding dullness of the day. "Madam," he said, with the gallantry

which had probably distinguished their early intercourse, "it is the finest day I have ever seen." Before the close of the year, he not only had the privy seal conferred on him, but was appointed Lord-Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the North Riding of Yorkshire; one of the commissioners to treat of a union between England and Scotland; and one of the governors of the Charter House. On the 9th of March, 1703, he was created Duke of Normanby, and, on the 23d of the same month, Duke of Buckinghamshire.

The favours, however, which the Whigs generally, and more especially the great Duke of Marlborough, received at the queen's hands, were sufficient to blot out from Buckingham's mind the memory of all former benefits, and to excite his ill-humour and indignation to a very unreasonable pitch. He petulantly threw up his office of privy seal; and, moreover, in the queen's hearing, is said to have muttered words which accused her of childishness, and of being easily led by those who had designs upon her. Disappointment dipped his pen in malice; and in his "Feast of the Gods," though he spared the character of the queen, he had the bad feeling and bad taste to attack that of her consort, Prince George of Denmark, in a very unjustifiable manner.

It was during his consequent absence from court, and cessation from state employments, that the duke occupied himself in constructing his

celebrated house in St. James's Park, on the site of which the present Buckingham Palace now stands. Near it had formerly stood old Arlington House, the residence of the famous Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington, of whom Buckingham purchased the property. His mode of living in his new mansion, its advantages and unusual splendour, and his personal habits the duke has himself described in a well-known letter, which he addressed to the Duke of Shrewsbury.

That the Duke of Buckingham was a determined gamester is unquestionable. He has even been accused of having played unfairly; but as he appears to have been a loser by the vice, the fact may, perhaps, be doubted. Another of his vices was an inordinate love of women, his addiction to which passion, and his profligate notions in regard to the female sex, are exemplified in more than one passage in his works. The duke was three times married, and, in addition to his legal issue, was the father of at least three natural children, who survived him.[1]

There are many passages in the works of the Duke of Buckingham which prove him to have

[1] After the death of Edmund Sheffield, second Duke of Buckingham, a greater part of the family estates, by the will of the first duke, were bequeathed to Charles Herbert, his illegitimate son, by a Mrs. Lambert, on condition that he should adopt the surname of Sheffield. This person was created a baronet in 1755, and married a daughter of General Sabine, by whom he had issue two sons and a daughter.

been a freethinker in religion, although, on the other hand, as not unfrequently happens with skeptical persons, he seems to have been singularly open to superstition. In his poem of the "Vision," he says:

> "Amazed, I waked in haste,
> All trembling at my doom;
> Dreams oft repeat adventures past,
> And tell the ills to come."

The conversation of the Duke of Buckingham was not altogether without wit, of which we have already given one or two instances. We will record another, which is related by Speaker Onslow. The duke, with his usual force and bitterness, had one day been inveighing against the ministry in the House of Lords, when, on quitting the House, he was followed by the younger Craggs, a man who, though of very low family, had risen to be secretary of state, and who was known to be peculiarly sensitive of any allusion to the meanness of his birth. Craggs, addressing himself to the duke with the familiarity which characterised him: "Come, my Lord Duke," he said, "notwithstanding all your severity to-day, your Grace, who has been so often in administration, must be aware that business must be carried on, and that the old proverb is true, that the pot must boil." "Why, yes," retorted the duke, "it is an old and a true proverb; but, as you well know, Mr. Secretary,

there is as old and as true a one, that when the pot boils the scum is uppermost." A person who dined with Craggs the same day assured Speaker Onslow that the effects of his discomfiture were visible the whole evening.

The following anecdote of the Duke of Buckingham, though rational in the abstract, will be regarded, perhaps, as having more of irreligion in it than wit. Burnet tells us that when, in the reign of James the Second, the priests made a particular set at the duke, with a view of converting him to popery, "I am willing," he said, "to receive instruction; but as it has taken me much pains to believe in God at all, it must be an extraordinary argument that can make me believe that man is quits with God and made God."

According to Doctor Johnson, this "censure of transubstantiation" was uttered long since by Anne Askew, one of the early sufferers for the Protestant religion in the reign of Henry the Eighth.[1]

[1] Anne Askew, after undergoing the terrible agonies of the rack, was burnt to death on the 16th of July, 1546, about the twenty-fifth year of her age. The remarkable "censure of transubstantiation," referred to by Doctor Johnson, was uttered by her during her examination before the Privy Council, in reply to some foolish interrogatories put to her by Sir Martin Bowes, the lord mayor. The following passage in Strype's "Memorials," which was unquestionably in Doctor Johnson's mind, is too remarkable to be omitted: "Sir Martin Bowes, sitting with the council, as most meet for his wisdom, and seeing her stand upon life and death, — 'I pray you,' quoth he, 'my lords, give me

And he expresses his surprise that Burnet, the historian of the Reformation, should have been ignorant of the fact.

Of the Duke of Buckingham's writings, whether in prose or verse, it is sufficient to say that they have deservedly fallen into disrepute. Pope said of him: "The Duke of Buckingham is superficial in everything; even in poetry, which was his forte." The poem on which his fame rests is the "Essay on Satire"—a poem, however, of which the far greater part was written by Dryden, and for which that great poet received his memorable cudgelling in Rose Alley. According to Dean Lockier, the duke merely made a few alterations in the poem, and these were, generally speaking, for the worse. And yet the duke had the impudence to publish the "Satire" as his own.

leave to talk with this woman.' Leave was granted. 'Thou foolish woman, sayest thou that the priests cannot make the body of Christ?' *Anne Askew.*—'I say so, my lord, for I have read that God made man, but that man can make God I never yet read, nor I suppose ever shall read it.' *Lord Mayor.*—'No, thou foolish woman! after the words of consecration, is it not the Lord's body?' *Anne Askew.*—'It is but consecrated bread, or sacramental bread.' *Lord Mayor.*—'What if a mouse eat it after consecration? What shall become of the mouse? What sayest thou, thou foolish woman?' *Anne Askew.*—'What shall become of her say you, my lord?' *Lord Mayor.*—'I say that that mouse is damned.' *Anne Askew.*—'Alack, poor mouse!' By this time my lords heard enough of my Lord Mayor's divinity; and perceiving that some could not keep in their laughing, proceeded to the butchery and slaughter that they intended afore they came thither."

On the change of ministry in 1710, the Duke of Buckingham once more came into office with the Tories. The queen offered him the appointment of lord chancellor, which he refused; the year following, however, he accepted the office of lord steward of the household, and, shortly afterward, was appointed president of the council. On the accession of George the Second, his talents meeting with no encouragement from that monarch, he continued constantly opposed to the court. In consequence of this neglect, he appears to have transferred his homage from the palace to the muses, and in the next few years produced his tragedies of "Julius Cæsar" and "Marcus Brutus," a class of literary composition for which he was as little qualified as he was to be a minister of state. For the latter play, Pope composed two choruses, of which Warburton says they only made the meanness of the piece the more conspicuous.

Spring Macky says of the Duke of Buckingham: "He is a nobleman of learning and good natural parts, but of no principles. Violent for the High Church, yet seldom goes to it; very proud, insolent, and covetous, and takes all advantages. In paying his debts, unwilling; and is neither esteemed nor beloved; for notwithstanding his great interest at the court of Queen Anne, it is certain that he hath none in either house of Parliament, or in the country." It has been said that this character is too severe; but as far as

posterity has the means of judging, we can only come to the conclusion that he was characterised by many vices, and, apparently, by scarcely a single virtue. The best that can be said of him is that he was a brave man, and an agreeable companion. His laugh is described as having been the pleasantest in the world; and though his temper was passionate, his disposition is said to have been a forgiving one.

The duke, as we have already mentioned, was three times married. His choice fell, on each occasion, on a widow. His first wife was Ursula, daughter of Colonel Stawel, and widow of Edward, first Earl of Conway, by whom he had no issue. He married, secondly, Catherine, daughter of Fulke Greville, fifth Lord Brooke, and widow of Baptist Noel, second Earl of Gainsborough, who also died without issue; and, thirdly, Catherine Darnley, a natural daughter of James the Second, and widow of James, Earl of Anglesey, an extraordinary woman, whose eccentricities will form the subject of our next memoir.

By his third wife, the duke was the father of four children (three sons and one daughter), of whom two died in their infancy, and only one, Edmund, second Duke of Buckingham, survived him. The duke has bequeathed us some verses on the death of his eldest son, Robert, which show that he deeply lamented his loss, but which possess more pathos than poetry, and very little

of either one or the other. The duke speaks of his offspring as —

"A child, of whom kind Heaven
Not only hope bestows,
But has already given
Him all our hopes propose."

And he concludes his wretched effusion:

"But why so much digression,
This fatal loss to show?
Alas! there's no expression
Can tell a parent's woe!"

The duke himself expired 24th February, 1721, at the age of seventy-one. His corpse lay in state in great magnificence at Buckingham House, whence it was transferred to Westminster Abbey, and interred with much pomp in Henry the Seventh's Chapel. By his will the sum of five hundred pounds was to be expended on his monument, on which was to be inscribed the following remarkable epitaph, written by himself:

"Dubius sed non improbus vixi,
Incertus morior sed inturbatus,
Humanum est nescire et errare,
Christum adveneror, Deo confido
Omnipotenti, benevolentissimo;
Ens Entium misere mihi."

By order of Bishop Atterbury, then Dean of Westminster, the words *Christum adveneror* were

omitted, it being supposed that they were intended to derogate from the divine nature of our Saviour. If it were really necessary, however, to make an exception at all, an objection might just as well have been raised to the commencing couplet, which is quite as offensive as the words that were omitted.

The duke, as has been already mentioned, was succeeded in his titles by his only surviving son, Edmund, the second and last Duke of Buckingham of his name. This young man, after a short life of great promise, died at Rome on the 30th of October, 1735. His remains, having been brought to England, were interred near those of his father in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, where a curious effigy of him in wax still points out the spot where he lies. Pope also wrote his epitaph, in verses which are sufficiently well known, but which would be considered unworthy of a less gifted genius than himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

CATHERINE DARNLEY, DUCHESS OF BUCKINGHAM.

Character of the Duchess Written by Herself — Her Marriage in 1699 to James Annesley, Third Earl of Anglesey — Second Marriage to Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, and Separation from Him by Act of Parliament — Her Daughter by the Duke Married to William Phipps, Esq., Ancestor of the Present Marquis of Normanby — Singular Anecdote of the Duchess's Mother, Lady Dorchester, Mistress of James the Second — The Duchess's Zeal in the Cause of the Pretender — Anecdote of Her Related by Horace Walpole — Anecdote of Pulteney, Earl of Bath — The Duchess's Efforts to Interest Sir Robert Walpole in the Cause of the Stuarts — Her Correspondence with Him — Singular Interview with Lord Hervey — Her Love of Pomp and Display — Extract from Horace Walpole's Letter to Sir Horace Mann — The Duchess's Flattering Character of Herself — Her Death in 1743.

THERE is extant a "character" of this extraordinary woman, teeming with fulsome compliments and unblushing encomiums, which, there is every reason to believe, was the production of her own pen. After her death an attempt was made to father it on Pope; but not only does Bishop Warburton positively deny that it was written by the poet, but Pope himself, in one of his letters, throws

some important light on this literary curiosity. In a letter to James Moyser, Esq., dated 11th July, 1743, he writes: "There was a character written of her Grace, by herself, with what help I know not, but she showed it to me in her blots, and pressed me by all the abjurations of friendship to give her my sincere opinion of it. I acted honourably and did so. She seemed to take it patiently, and, upon many exceptions which I made, engaged me to take the whole, and select out of it just as much as I judged might stand, and return her the copy. I did so. Immediately she picked a quarrel with me, and we never saw each other in five or six years. In the meantime, she showed this 'Character' (as much as was extracted of it in my handwriting), as a composition of my own in her praise, and, very probably, it is now in the hands of Lord Hervey." Thus much it was necessary to premise; first, because the performance was an extraordinary one, and, secondly, because we may more than once have occasion to refer to it in the present memoir.

Catherine Darnley was the illegitimate daughter of James the Second, by Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester, the too celebrated offspring of Sir Charles Sedley, the poet and the wit. James conferred on his daughter the surname of Darnley, and married her, at an early age, on the 28th of October, 1699, to James Annesley, third Earl of Anglesey. With this nobleman she lived on the

worst terms. In her "Character" it is said, "She was married first to James, Earl of Anglesey, and secondly to John Sheffield, Duke of Bucks and Normanby. With the former, she exercised the virtues of patience and suffering, as long as there was any hopes of doing good by either; with the latter all other conjugal virtues." Their union was of very short duration, for the earl's ill-treatment of her exceeding all bounds of endurance, they were separated by Act of Parliament, on the ground of "cruel and causeless ill-usage" on the part of the husband. The only issue of this ill-sorted marriage was a daughter, Catherine, married to William Phipps, Esq., from which union the present Marquis of Normanby is descended.

The Earl of Anglesey died on the 18th of January, 1702, and about three years afterward, his widow accepted the hand of John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, for whose talents she professed the highest admiration, and whose happiness, she informs us, it was the sole object of her existence to promote. The duke, on his part, repaid her affection with far more kindness and respect than he seems to have shown toward either of his former wives. "Whenever she was ill," we are told, "or in danger (which generally happened when she was with a child, or at her lying-in), he showed all possible marks of concern; and when there was more than ordinary danger, his servants often found him on his knees at prayers; and on those occa-

sions he has made vows, in case she recovered, to give in charities, sometimes two hundred, sometimes three hundred pounds at a time, which he performed punctually." The duke himself alludes to the care which he took of his wife during her lying-in, or, as he expresses it, during the "mysteries of Lucina."

The duchess was ridiculously proud of her royal birth, but if we are to believe her mother, who was, unquestionably, the best judge in the matter, there existed some doubt whether in fact she were really the daughter of King James. Her mother is reported to have one day said to her: "You need not be so vain, daughter; you are not the king's daughter, but Colonel Graham's."[1] This person was a fashionable lounger at the courts of Charles and James, and as Lady Dorchester was generally believed to have conferred her favours on him, there seems to have been something more in the speech than a mere taunt. Graham was himself willing to have the story believed. The Duchess of Buckingham and Graham's legitimate daughter, the Countess of Berkshire, were thought to bear a strong resemblance to each other. "Well, well," said Graham, "kings are all-powerful, and one

[1] A short time before her death, the duchess expressed an intention of being buried near her father at Paris. George Selwyn, alluding to her being the supposed daughter of Colonel Graham, remarked: "She need not go out of England to accomplish that."

must not complain; but certainly the same man was the father of those two women."

The duchess was, of course, the person least likely to place any faith in these surmises, and, moreover, by the enthusiasm which she exhibited in the cause of her half-brother, the Pretender, and by the exertions which she made to restore the house of Stuart, proved how firmly she was convinced of her own affinity to the blood-royal. Doctor King informs us that, in her zeal for the exiled family, she paid more than one visit to Versailles with the singular object of inducing Cardinal Fleury to embark in the same cause. We learn also, from Horace Walpole, that she paid occasional visits to the Pretender at Rome; and it appears by the Orford and Walpole papers that, when at Paris, she was in the habit of having frequent interviews with Bishop Atterbury in the Bois de Boulogne; ostensibly, with the view of obtaining his advice in regard to the education of her son, but in reality, to concert intrigues in favour of the Stuarts. It is even affirmed to have been owing to the arguments which she used with the Pretender, on a subsequent visit to Rome, that he was induced to remove his agents, Hay and Murray, and to invest Atterbury with the principal management of his affairs at the court of France.

Doctor King, alluding to the visits which the duchess paid to Cardinal Fleury at Versailles, observes: "She got nothing from the cardinal but

compliments and civil excuses; and was laughed at by both courts for her pompous manner of travelling, in which she affected the state of a sovereign prince." Meanness, it has been said, is not always incompatible with magnificence, and, if we may rely on the following anecdote, the conduct of the Duchess of Buckingham affords sufficient evidence of the truth of the axiom. Horace Walpole, in allusion to her frequent visits to the Continent, observes: "She always stopped at Paris, visited the church where lay the unburied body of James, and wept over it. A poor Benedictine of the convent, observing her filial piety, took notice to her Grace that the velvet pall that covered the coffin was become threadbare, — and so it remained."

Previous to one of her journeys to Rome, dreading the consequences which would follow a discovery of her political intrigues, she is said to have caused a deed to be drawn up, making over the title to her estate to the celebrated William Pulteney, afterward Earl of Bath. On her return to England, ascertaining there was little likelihood of her being molested by the government, she applied to Pulteney for the restoration of this important document. To her dismay, he informed her it could nowhere be found. The duchess naturally became importunate for its restoration; but Pulteney still persisting in his inability to produce it, the probability seems to have been that she would

never have received justice at his hands, had not Lord Mansfield told him plainly that unless he satisfied the duchess he could never show his face again. On this, Lord Bath is said to have reluctantly signed a release to her of her estate.

A favourite and very ridiculous project of the Duchess of Buckingham was to entice the prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, to join with her in effecting the restoration of the Stuarts. She proceeded, indeed, to such lengths in the prosecution of this extraordinary scheme, as actually to make Sir Robert an offer of her hand on condition that he should forward her views. The honour was politely declined by the minister. The duchess, however, was so far from being offended by his want of gallantry that she, shortly afterward, appointed him one of the executors of her will. We have on record another instance of her offering the minister a matrimonial bait, with the object of purchasing his adherence to the exiled family. The duchess, aware of Sir Robert's extreme partiality for his daughter, afterward Lady Churchill, inquired significantly of him if he remembered what had not been thought too great a reward for Lord Clarendon for restoring the royal family. Sir Robert affected not to understand her. "Was not he allowed," she said, "to match his daughter to the Duke of York?" Sir Robert, we are told, merely smiled, and quitted the apartment.

There is extant a brief but curious correspond-

ence which passed between the duchess and Sir Robert, in connection with her Jacobite intrigues. The duchess, it appears, on the occasion of one of her treasonable visits to the Continent, had quitted England without obtaining the then requisite permission from the sovereign, and, accordingly, we find her writing to the minister from Boulogne, preferring her best excuses for the omission. "I know," she writes, "there is a usual form, as I take it only to be esteemed, of any peer's asking permission of the king (or queen in the present circumstance) to go out of the kingdom, but even that ceremony I thought reached not to women, whose being in or out of their country seemed never to be of the least consequence." In the same letter, alluding to her well-known intrigues for the exiled family, she speaks of them as "nonsensical stories," which it makes her "almost laugh to hear." No one, however, knew better than Sir Robert that these stories were but too true.

Sir Robert Walpole, indeed, throughout his long administration, appears to have been perfectly well acquainted with all the Quixotic proceedings of the Duchess of Buckingham. His informant was Colonel Cecil, an agent of the Pretender, who, although a man of honour, was a weak and illiterate person, and unconsciously suffered himself to become a mere dupe in the hands of the minister. Fully persuaded that it was Sir Robert's intention to

restore the house of Stuart, he suffered his secrets to be elicited from him, and was, in fact, a convenient tool of the English government, while he imagined himself to be performing the most valuable services for his unfortunate master. It may be remarked that, during the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, not a plot appears to have been hatched, either at the chevalier's court or among the Jacobites in England, of which that clear-sighted minister was not early informed, and thus was enabled to defeat them without clamour or expense.

Among other frivolities which distinguished the character of the Duchess of Buckingham, it was her custom, on the anniversary of the execution of her presumed grandfather, Charles the First, to hold a solemn fast-day, at Buckingham House. It was on one of these occasions that she received, in mournful state and under peculiar circumstances, the celebrated John, Lord Hervey.

Ostensibly, her object in requiring Lord Hervey's attendance was to negotiate a marriage between his eldest daughter and her own grandson, Constantine, afterward the first Lord Mulgrave; in reality, however, her motive appears to have been to convert Lord Hervey to her own political way of thinking, and, by a theatrical display of mournful grandeur, to impress him with a favourable notion of the importance of the designs which she had in hand. Accordingly, when Lord Her-

vey entered the great drawing-room at Buckingham House, he found the duchess seated in a chair of state in the deepest mourning, surrounded by her women as black and dismal looking as herself. Of the result of the interview we have no record. The marriage, indeed, subsequently took place; but as Lord Hervey continued steadfast in his political opinions, the parade and trappings of the fantastic duchess seem to have failed in their intended effect.[1]

Ridiculous as appears to have been the ceremony to which we have just referred, it was not altogether inconsistent with the manners and customs of the period. It may be remarked that, as late as the reign of George the First, it was usual, on the death of a husband, for a lady of any consequence to receive company in solemn state. The apartments which she occupied, as well as the staircase by which her guests ascended, were hung with black. The lady herself, shrouded with black crape, sat upright in bed under a canopy

[1] Horace Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann, March 3, 1743: "Lord Hervey has entertained the town with another piece of wisdom. On Sunday it was declared that he had married his eldest daughter the night before to a Mr. Phipps, grandson of the Duchess of Buckingham. They sent for the boy but the day before from Oxford, and bedded them at a day's notice. But after all this mystery, it does not turn out that there is anything great in this match, but the greatness of the secret. Poor Hervey, the brother, is in fear and trembling, for he apprehends being ravished to bed to some fortune or other with as little ceremony."

of the same sable hue; the apartment was lighted by a single taper; and, if the deceased happened to have left children, they were arranged, like the figures on an ancient monument, at the foot of the bed. No word was spoken, and the guests, after silently making their obeisance to the mourner, retired with the solemnity with which they came.

A love of display — originating apparently in the notion that it rendered her connection with royalty more evident, was a predominant feature in the character of the duchess. Among other evidences which she gave of this weakness, may be mentioned the princely magnificence with which she travelled when abroad, and the pomp with which she buried her husband and her son. When the remains of the latter were brought from Rome to be interred in Westminster Abbey, she wrote to the Duchess of Marlborough, requesting the loan of the triumphal car which had carried the body of the great duke to the grave. "It carried my Lord Marlborough," was the caustic reply, "and shall never be used by anybody else." "I have consulted the undertaker," was the retort of the other duchess, "and he tells me I can have a finer for twenty pounds." She herself dressed up a wax figure of her son (which may still be seen in a glass case in Westminster Abbey), and carefully superintended the ceremony of his lying in state. To her more intimate friends she sent word that, for their better convenience, she was

willing to introduce them to the show by a private door.

Horace Walpole, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, dated 24th December, 1741, relates an amusing anecdote of the duchess. "The Duchess of Buckingham," he says, "who is more mad with pride than any mercer's wife in Bedlam, came the other night to the opera *en princesse*, literally in robes, red velvet, and ermine. I must tell you a story of her. Last week she sent for Cori,[1] to pay him for her opera ticket; he was not at home, but went in an hour afterward. She said, did he treat her like a tradeswoman? She would teach him to respect women of her birth; said he was in league with Mr. Sheffield[2] to abuse her, and bade him come the next morning at nine. He came, and she made him wait till eight at night, only sending him an omelet and a bottle of wine. As it was Friday, and he a Catholic, she supposed he did not eat meat. At last she received him in all the form of a princess giving audience to an ambassador. 'Now,' she said, 'she had punished him.'" It may be mentioned that, during her several visits to Rome, the duchess was in the habit of having her opera box decorated in a similar manner to those set apart for crowned heads. When in France, too, she refused to pay her re-

[1] Angelo Maria Cori, prompter to the opera.

[2] Natural son of her late husband, with whom she was at law and on bad terms.

spects at Versailles, on the ground that the French court refused her the rank of a princess of the blood.

The anecdotes which we have recorded of the Duchess of Buckingham render it unnecessary to offer any remarks on her character; yet the portrait which she has drawn of herself is too striking an exemplification of human vanity to be altogether omitted. "Her heart was as compassionate as it was great; her affections warm, even to solicitude; her friendship not violent or jealous, but rational and persevering; her gratitude equal and constant to the living, to the dead boundless and heroical. As her thoughts were her own, so were her words, and she was as sincere in uttering her judgment as she was impartial in forming it. She was a safe companion; many were served, none ever suffered by her acquaintance. Inoffensive when provoked, when unprovoked not stupid; but the moment her enemy ceased to be hurtful she could cease to act as an enemy, and indeed, when forced to be so, the more a finished one for having been long a-making, and her proceeding with ill people was more in a calm and steady course, like justice, than in quick and passionate onsets, like revenge. As for those of whom she only thought ill, she considered them not so much as once to wish them ill; of such her contempt was great enough to put a stop to all other passions that could hurt them. Her love and aver-

sion, her gratitude and resentment, her esteem and neglect, were equally open and strong, and alterable only from the alterations of the persons who created them. Her mind was too noble to be insincere, and her heart too honest to stand in need of it; so that she never found cause to repent her conduct either to a friend or an enemy."

Of her person it is said in the same "Character:" "The nicest eye could find no fault in the outward lineaments of her face, or proportion of her body. It was such as pleased wherever she had a desire it should; yet she never envied that of any other which might better please in general." Her beauty was probably always of the scornful kind. Lord Lansdowne writes, in his "Progress of Beauty:"

"Soft and delicious as a southern sky,
Are Dashwood's smiles; — when Darnley frowns we die."

The duchess appears to have preserved her beauty to a late period. Baron de Bothmar, in a letter dated the 13th of August, 1714, alluding to the Duke of Buckingham having applied for the appointment of lady of the bedchamber for his eccentric wife, writes to his correspondent, M. Bernsdorff: "She is handsome, and appears to me fit for such a place; but she could not obtain it from the late queen, although she was her natural sister. I don't know if it was for that reason she did not choose to have her so

near her, but preferred rather to give her a pension."

The Duchess of Buckingham died at the age of sixty-two, 13th March, 1743. Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann, the day following her death: "Princess Buckingham is dead or dying; she has sent for Mr. Anstis, and settled the ceremonial of her burial. On Saturday she was so ill that she feared dying before the pomp was come home. She said, 'Why don't they send the canopy for me to see? Let them send it though all the tassels are not finished.' But yesterday was the greatest stroke of all. She made her ladies vow to her that, if she should lie senseless, they would not sit down in the room before she was dead." By her own direction she was buried with great pomp in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, where there was formerly a waxen figure of her, adorned with jewels, and, in the same case, another figure of her daughter, Lady Sophia Katharina Sheffield, standing by her side. The figure of the duchess had been prepared in her lifetime by her own hands.

CHAPTER IX.

ROBERT HARLEY, EARL OF OXFORD.

Ancestors of Robert Harley — His Birth — Offers His Services to the Prince of Orange at the Revolution — Is Coldly Received by Him — Elected Speaker of the House of Commons — Appointed Secretary of State — Procures the Secretaryship at War for Henry St. John — His Intrigues with Mrs. Masham — His Efforts to Insinuate Himself into Her Confidence by Promoting Her Union with Mr. Masham — Jealousy of the Duchess of Marlborough — Harley's Influence over Queen Anne — His Intrigues against the Duke of Marlborough and Godolphin — The Queen Attends a Privy Council in Person — Harley Dismissed from His Office, through the Influence of the Whig Party — The Queen's Increasing Dislike of the Whigs — Harley's Interested Patronage of Literary Men — The Duke of Shrewsbury Persuaded to League Himself with the Tories — Ultimate Overthrow of the Whig Party — Attempt on Harley's Life by the Marquis de Guiscard — Warrant Issued for His Arrest — Brought before the Privy Council — He Endeavours to Revenge Himself on St. John — Failing in That, He Stabs Harley with a Penknife during His Examination before the Council — And Dies a Few Days Afterward in Newgate.

ROBERT HARLEY, the celebrated minister, was the representative of an ancient family, who held the lordship of Harley, in Shropshire, and distinguished themselves by their loyalty and valour, previous to the Norman conquest. The father of

Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford.
Photo-etching after the painting by Kneller,
in the British Museum.

the statesman was Sir Edward Harley, a staunch Presbyterian, who raised a regiment during the civil troubles, and in one of the first engagements between Charles the First and the Parliament was shot with a musket-ball, which it is said he carried in his body fifty-eight years. In 1647, this gentleman was one of the eleven members of the House of Commons who insisted on the expediency of coming to terms with the unfortunate king, and who were in consequence impeached by the army for high treason. He had a considerable share in effecting the restoration of Charles the Second, for which service he was rewarded with the government of Dunkirk and the Order of the Bath, and was also offered a peerage, which he thought proper to refuse. During the whole of this reign, Sir Edward Harley distinguished himself as a frequent and able speaker in the House of Commons. At the revolution of 1688, the old man joined the cause of the Prince of Orange, and marched with a troop of horse, of his own raising, to Worcester, of which place the gentlemen of the county voted him the governor. He sat in more than one Parliament during the reign of William and Mary, and died, at a very advanced age, on the 8th of December, 1700.

His eldest son, the subject of the present memoir, was born in Bow Street, Covent Garden, on the 5th of December, 1661. He was carefully instructed in the Presbyterian principles of his

family, and received his education at a private school, kept by the Rev. Mr. Birch at Shilton, in Oxfordshire. At the revolution he engaged with ardour in the cause of the Prince of Orange; and after assisting his father in raising a troop of horse, waited personally on the prince with a tender of his allegiance. William, however, either underrated his services, or was blind to his abilities, and, consequently, he again found himself dependent on his own genius and resources for the advancement of his interests and the gratification of his ambitious views.

In the first Parliament called by William and Mary, he was chosen member for Tregony, in Cornwall; and in 1690 was returned for Radnor, for which place he sat, during several successive Parliaments, till he was called up to the House of Lords. His genius seems to have been rather of that order which attracts public attention imperceptibly and by degrees, than which flashes with sudden brilliancy, and commands the observation of mankind. He was a close debater rather than a splendid orator, and was better qualified to figure as a minister of finance than as the leader of an administration. To talents, however, of a high order, he added industry and unwearying application. He was, moreover, inordinately ambitious, and, in the gratification of that passion, was little scrupulous in availing himself of chicanery and intrigue. Neglect and disappointment are

excellent incentives to ambition. "Harley," says Burnet, "not being considered at the revolution as he thought he deserved, set himself to oppose the court in everything, and to find fault with the whole administration." Though educated in the staunchest Whig principles, as soon as his interests required a sacrifice of those principles he leagued himself with the Tories; and, though a Presbyterian, and, indeed, suspected of a tendency to Puritanism, contrived to obtain the confidence of the High Church party, while at the same time he had art enough to continue in favour with the Dissenters. It was owing to this temporising policy, and to the dexterity with which he insinuated himself into the good graces of two very opposite parties, that, when King William, at the close of his reign, surrounded himself with a Tory ministry, Harley had influence enough to get himself elected Speaker of the House of Commons. This high situation he held during three successive Parliaments.

Harley seems to have been eminently well qualified to fill the office of Speaker. Both Burnet and Lockhart agree that his natural talents were of a high order, his learning great, and his application extraordinary.

On the accession of Queen Anne, the political rise of Harley was almost as rapid as he himself could have wished. Without entering into the complicated politics of the earlier part of that

reign, it may be necessary to observe that at this period the Tories were nominally in power. Some few of the Whigs, indeed, continued to fill the same situations which they held at the close of the last reign, but every office which became vacant was conferred upon the Tories. Such was the early position of that famous coalition of which Marlborough and Godolphin, who, at this period, must be regarded as Tories, were at the head, and which was generally known as the Godolphin administration.

By degrees, however, the Whigs recovered a share of their former influence; it became evident that they must speedily triumph over their enemies; and, accordingly, Marlborough and Godolphin began to think it time to sacrifice their principles to their interests, and, instead of falling with the Tories, determined, if possible, to become the leaders of the Whigs. The intentions of these two celebrated men became, shortly, too evident to be mistaken, and several of the High Church and ultra-Tories resigned their places in disgust. It was on the occasion of this defection, in 1704, that Harley, who owed his political importance less to his genius than to his convenient connection alike with Whigs, Tories, and Dissenters, was raised to the office of secretary of state. He had sufficient influence, moreover, to bring into power with him Henry St. John, afterward the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, who, at the same time, was

appointed secretary at war. St. John, then a very young man, with a foresight superior to that of more experienced politicians, seems to have been fully alive to the great abilities and intriguing genius of Harley, and to have attached himself to him as the person most likely to assist him in his views of personal aggrandisement. Harley, on his part, seems to have conceived a reciprocal admiration for the genius of St. John, and to have gladly availed himself of those splendid abilities, which at this period were in their youthful promise. Such was the nature of the early and celebrated friendship between Harley and St. John, which, it is needless to add, was afterward converted into hostility as memorable.

A desire to strengthen themselves by conciliating the Whig party seems to have been the secret motive which induced Marlborough and Godolphin to admit Harley to a share of power. Harley, however, had now made his grand move; he was not exactly the person to remain a submissive tool in the hands of others; his intriguing and ambitious nature began to display itself; nor was it long before his colleagues had sufficient reason to repent of their folly in admitting him to a share of the government. Almost from the moment of his accession to office, we may trace the commencement of those celebrated court intrigues which constitute the peculiar feature of the reign of Queen Anne.

The same circumstance which elevated Harley to the pinnacle of greatness was, eventually, the cause of his fall. This was his connection with the celebrated Mrs. Masham, his distant relative and convenient tool. Whether that lady was ever in the state of indigence represented by her enemy, the Duchess of Marlborough, — whether there was any truth in her Grace's picture of the "ragged boy," [1] or that Mrs. Masham was ever a suppliant to her for pecuniary relief, — cannot now, with any correctness, be ascertained. Certain it is, however, that Harley neglected his relation when his assistance might have been of service to her, and assiduously paid his court to her when her star rose in the ascendant. With his usual tact and foresight, he was one of the first to discover the secret intercourse between the queen and Mrs. Masham, and the increasing

[1] Mrs. Masham's brother, afterward General John Hill. "Jack Hill," says the duchess, "whom the bottlemen afterward called honest Jack, was a tall boy, whom I clothed, for he was all in rags, and put to school at St. Albans to one Mr. James, who had been an usher under Doctor Busby, of Westminster; and whenever I went to St. Alban's I sent for him, and was as kind to him as if he had been my own child. After he had learned what he could there, a vacancy happening of page of honour to the Prince of Denmark, his Highness was pleased, at my request, to take him. I afterward got my Lord Marlborough to make him groom of the bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester; and though my lord always said that Jack Hill was good for nothing, yet, to oblige me, he made him his aid-de-camp, and afterward gave him a regiment."

influence exercised by the bedchamber-woman over her royal mistress. He immediately conceived the project of destroying the power of the Duke of Marlborough, by undermining the imperious duchess in the affections of her royal mistress. With this view, he instigated Mrs. Masham to complete her triumph over her rival; he fed her with the most fulsome flattery, and assisted her on all occasions with his influence and advice.

Harley, in pursuing his favourite schemes of personal aggrandisement, seems to have been little scrupulous in regard to the means which he resorted to, and to have been perfectly indifferent, so that he gained his ends, whether the train of his chicanery was laid in the bedchamber or the senate. Not that he can be accused of any grave political offence, nor even of a direct falsehood; but his life was, after all, but a long *equivoque*, and his history comprises little more than a curious disentanglement of unworthy intrigue. Conscious, apparently, that he possessed neither the commanding eloquence nor the lofty genius which are usually the stepping-stones to great political power, he seems to have been determined to supply the want of high intellectual superiority by arming himself with the weapons of artifice and dissimulation. With this object, he unscrupulously availed himself of female influence and intrigue, and, to use an expression of Lord Wharton, had been long "nibbling" with the new favourite, Mrs.

Masham. By degrees, he brought himself to be regarded by her as an agreeable companion; but it was evident that his object still remained unattained, unless he could contrive to insinuate himself into her confidence, and, if possible, lay her under a personal obligation to himself. The manner in which the wily statesman accomplished his purpose not only affords remarkable evidence of his talent for intrigue, but discovers on how slender a foundation the fate of ministers and of nations occasionally rests. Mrs. Masham, who, at this period, was only Miss Abigail Hill, had become enamoured, it seems, of a Mr. Masham, one of the queen's pages, a gentleman considerably younger than herself. In a moment of weakness, Harley wrung from her, not only this delicate secret, but the fact that her attachment was apparently not reciprocated. He immediately caused the page to be sounded by an old courtier, in whose discretion he could confide. Masham was convinced by this person that future wealth and honours would follow his marriage with the favourite; and thus, apparently with little difficulty, he was transformed from the distant friend to the eager lover. The queen herself was made an accomplice in the affair, and, eventually, to the triumphant satisfaction of both Harley and Mrs. Masham, consented to be present at a secret marriage, which was performed in the apartments of the queen's physician, Doctor Arbuthnot.

Hitherto, the Duchess of Marlborough had affected to regard Mrs. Masham as the mere waiting-woman. The duchess had been the means of establishing her humble kinswoman at court; and though reports could not fail to have reached her of the queen's increasing partiality for her future rival, she was naturally unwilling to credit the fickleness of the one, or the ingratitude of the other. When, at length, however, the story of the secret marriage was related to her, — accompanied, moreover, by convincing proofs of the queen having transferred her affections to another, — the jealousy and indignation of the spoiled and imperious duchess knew no bounds. It was the first time that her royal mistress had withheld her confidence from her, or, indeed, had taken any step in which the duchess was not consulted and made a party in the affair. After this period, the latter made repeated attempts to recover her lost influence over the queen's affections, but her expostulations led only to recrimination, and recrimination produced disgust. Gradually, she became an object of positive aversion to her royal mistress; with her influence over the queen declined that of the Whig party; and in the end, when circumstances at length permitted the queen to throw off the mask, and publicly discard her haughty favourite, it is needless to add that the great Duke of Marlborough and the entire Whig party were involved in the fall of this extraordinary woman.

In the meantime, — whether grateful to Harley for having procured her the man of her choice, or captivated by his specious arguments and insinuating address, — Mrs. Masham seems to have been fully persuaded by the designing statesman that their mutual interests tended toward the same goal, and by degrees to have resigned herself entirely into his hands. It was not, indeed, till a later period, when she had leagued herself with Bolingbroke, and when Bolingbroke persuaded her, in his turn, to connive at the ruin of Harley, that Mrs. Masham seems to have been fully aware of the extraordinary power with which her bedchamber influence had invested her. Harley, however, for a time at least, was sufficiently rewarded for the assiduous court which he paid to the new favourite. By her means he was frequently admitted to the most secret interviews with the queen, and, while alone with his royal mistress in her closet, was afforded the most favourable opportunities of improving her prejudices against the Whigs, and advancing his own project of creating a Tory administration, of which he himself was to be the head.

For a considerable time, Harley, both as the minister and the closet companion, seems to have obtained an influence over the weak queen, secondary only to that of Mrs. Masham. With an ingratiating address, an extraordinary knowledge of human nature, and, especially, an intimate

acquaintance with the weaknesses of the queen's character, it was his art to drop the discussion of politics before it became wearisome; to amuse her with the gossip and gallantries of the court, and to pamper her with those fulsome flatteries, which seem to have been the cordial of her existence.

Harley and St. John were both finished adepts in dissimulation and intrigue; both were intimately acquainted with the machinery of courts and the motives of human action. The world, unquestionably, regards St. John as the more complete dissembler; for, in addition to his graceful and insinuating manners, the reputation of which has not yet faded, he figures as a brilliant writer and a still more brilliant orator; his ambition, moreover, assumed a higher and more romantic character; while the meteor-like splendour of his rise and fall was rendered the more vivid, from his being gifted with all those shining graces of mind and person which have been rarely, if ever, surpassed.

Nevertheless, it may be questioned whether, in their mutual course of intrigue and hypocrisy, Harley was, in fact, very far behind his gifted antagonist. Both commenced life with nearly the same advantages; both were cadets of ancient families, and both had, originally, been educated in the principles of the Dissenters. Regarding them, therefore, as competitors for power and fame, and as nicely matched in worldly advan-

tages and in the arts of intrigue, it is curious to watch the progress of their several careers. In regard to actual success, the advantage was, unquestionably, on the side of Harley, who not only intrigued himself into the post of first minister, but maintained his position against the genius of St. John, and of his numerous enemies, positively for three years, and nominally for four. Thus Harley attained to a greatness which Bolingbroke never achieved; and success is, generally speaking, the test of superiority. That Bolingbroke was the superior genius there can be no question; but at present we are merely discussing the question of superiority in regard to the arts of intrigue.

The queen, it may be remarked, especially prided herself on the countenance which she gave to religion and morality, and, consequently, it was an important point obtained by Harley, that his private character was as free from reproach as that of St. John was tainted by libertinism and profane wit. Another advantage possessed by Harley, in his intercourse with Queen Anne, was the art of accommodating his manners and conversation to the tastes and capacity of the particular person whom he addressed. With the queen, according as the occasion suited, he could be the agreeable trifler, the delicate flatterer, or, to all appearance, the high-minded and disinterested politician. Bolingbroke says of his former associate:

"Where anything was to be got he could wriggle himself in; when any misfortune threatened him he could find a way to wriggle himself out." Had Bolingbroke been permitted the same favourable opportunities of ingratiating himself with the queen which were allowed to Harley, he would never have achieved the extraordinary influence over her mind which his rival so successfully established. With a woman, indeed, of spirit and genius, his polished address, his fine person, and insidious philosophy would probably have engendered a reciprocity of feeling, and ensured his ultimate triumph. But it was far otherwise with a homely and insipid person like Queen Anne, whose nature it was to prefer gossip to wit, and scandal to intrigue; and who, jealous as she was of her prerogative and of the slightest approach to an undue familiarity, was, nevertheless, delighted whenever she could with decency free herself from the trammels of royalty, and associate herself with the tastes and habits of ordinary beings. In a word, she could be social with Harley where she would have been awed by St. John. The one had the art of descending to her own level; while the other, with the same impulse and desire to please, would unconsciously have discovered his intellectual superiority, and, from what we know of his character, might, occasionally, have betrayed an unlucky sneer in his flattery, and contempt in his wit.

Both Harley and St. John, it may be remarked, rested their ambitious hopes on the life of Queen Anne, without paying a proper regard to the favour of her successor. The premature death, therefore, of their royal mistress, left the one a disgraced, and the other a disappointed man. St. John, indeed, had succeeded in thrusting Harley from his pride of place, but he failed in his attempt to rise from the ruins of his rival; and, subsequently, the accession of the house of Hanover left them both powerless, and without the opportunity of again encountering each other in any political conflict. Had the queen lived, St. John would very probably have enjoyed a brief triumph, but, after a season, it may be questioned whether the quiet and crafty hypocrisy of Harley would not have obtained a fresh victory over the towering genius and more brilliant qualities of his antagonist.

The interviews between the queen and Harley, notwithstanding the extraordinary secrecy with which they were conducted, could not long elude the jealous vigilance of Marlborough and Godolphin. Placed, as we now are, behind the scenes, it is not a little amusing to peruse the letters addressed at this period by Harley to his colleagues, in which he professes toward them the warmest and purest feelings of fidelity and affection, while, at the same time, he was deliberately plotting their irremediable ruin. According to the Duchess of

Marlborough, Godolphin was the first to discover Harley's treachery, the duke being "too backward" in giving credit to his ambitious designs. At length, however, Harley's delinquency became too evident to be any longer mistaken, and, accordingly, Marlborough and Godolphin severally addressed letters to the queen, in which they intimated to her that the continuance of Harley in office must inevitably prejudice her affairs, and respectfully expressed their intention of resigning, in the event of his being retained in her confidence.

The draft of Marlborough's letter (which is in his own handwriting, with a trifling alteration by Godolphin) is still preserved, and is curious as displaying the consciousness which he felt of his own services, and his thorough and undisguised detestation of Harley.

"MADAM: — Since all the faithful services I have endeavoured to do you, and the unwearied pains I have taken for these ten days to satisfy and convince your Majesty's own mind, have not been able to give you any such impressions of the false and treacherous proceedings of Mr. Secretary Harley to lord treasurer and myself, but that your Majesty is pleased to countenance and to support him, to the ruin of your own business at home; I am very much afraid it will be attended with the sorrow and amazement of all Europe, as soon as

the noise of it gets abroad. And I find myself obliged to have so much regard to my own honour and reputation, as not to be every day made a sacrifice to falsehood and treachery, but most humbly to acquaint your Majesty, that no consideration can make me any longer serve with that man. And I beseech your Majesty to look upon me, from this moment, as forced out of your service, as long as you think fit to continue him in it.

"No heart is fuller of duty to your Majesty than mine; nobody has more sincere wishes for your prosperity, nor shall more constantly pray for your Majesty's long life, and for your happiness both here and hereafter. I am always with the greatest respect, and the truest zeal for your service, etc."

Neither the repeated threats nor the persuasions, however, resorted to by Marlborough and Godolphin, produced any effect upon the queen's mind. She still continued to receive the visits and to listen to the specious arguments of Harley, and, accordingly, the two ministers determined to bring matters to a crisis, and with this purpose absented themselves from council. The queen, notwithstanding that their intention of not being present had been previously communicated to her, adopted the extraordinary measure of attending the council in person. She even showed a determination to proceed to business as if nothing had happened,

and Harley, as perhaps had been preconcerted between them, commenced discussing the topic on which the members of the council had met to deliberate.

The result of the partisanship displayed by the queen, and the bold assurance exhibited by the secretary, was very different from what they seem to have confidently anticipated. As Harley coolly proceeded with the business of the day, the members of the council are said to have regarded each other with looks of astonishment, and murmurs were heard which gradually became more distinct. At length, the Duke of Somerset, the "proud duke," effectually put a stop to the memorable farce. "While the general and the lord treasurer," he said, "are absent, I do not see how we can proceed with the present deliberations." The remark, it was evident, conveyed the sense of the meeting, and Harley was compelled to desist in the midst of his oration. Cool and composed as he generally was, even under the most trying circumstances, he was unable to conceal his vexation; and at the same time, the queen, in evident agitation and alarm, retired sullenly and silently from the meeting. It was a proud, though a brief, triumph for the Whigs. The Houses of Lords and Commons unequivocally expressed their determination to support the existing ministry, and in the latter House, particularly, a bill of supply was purposely suffered to lie idle on the table, though

especially ordered for the day. The queen thus found herself in danger of being abandoned by the Whigs, without having a party at hand sufficiently powerful to supply their places. In her dilemma, she had no course to pursue but to court the party who were notoriously the objects of her hate; Marlborough was sent for the next day, and Harley received his dismissal from her hands.

Harley, however, though thwarted, was not vanquished. "Through the whole summer after his dismission," says the Duchess of Marlborough, "the queen continued to have secret correspondence with him. And that this might be the better managed, she stayed all the sultry season, even when the prince [1] was panting for breath, in that small house she had formerly purchased at Windsor, which, though as hot as an oven, was then said to be cool, because from the park such persons as Mrs. Masham had a mind to bring to her Majesty could be let in privately by the garden." Harley and his friends, it is said, used to brag in their cups that, while the ministers were lulled into a false confidence, they themselves were admitted to the royal closet by the back stairs and were engaged in assisting the queen to plot against her responsible advisers.

[1] The queen's husband, Prince George of Denmark, who was suffering from asthma.

The queen having thus condescended to become the tool of a party, Harley availed himself with so much adroitness of her deep-rooted prejudices against the Whigs, and of the woful intrigues of Mrs. Masham, that, in a short time, he was again enabled to array himself against his adversaries, with every prospect of ultimate success. Anne, at this period, had reason to be highly offended with the Whigs, in consequence of a proposition — which, though it doubtless originated in the private malice of the Duchess of Marlborough, seems to have been seriously contemplated by the falling ministry — that an address should be presented to the queen by the House of Commons, recommending the removal of her favourite bedchamber-woman, Mrs. Masham, from about her person. Anne, who always required to be thoroughly provoked before she could be induced to shake off her natural timidity and indecision, was thus rendered personally and warmly interested in the success of her underhand advisers, and, as we have already seen, became a secret conspirator against her own ministers. There were other circumstances which materially assisted Harley in his views of aggrandisement. The unpopularity of a long and expensive war, the general impression that it was protracted by the Duke of Marlborough for the purpose of filling his own coffers, the excitement caused by the trial of the popular idol, Doctor

Sacheverel, and the almost universal belief that the Church was in danger, had gradually alienated the affections of the people from the Whigs.

Harley, on his part, neglected no opportunity of converting passing events to his own advantage, and of throwing odium upon his adversaries. In this, his primary object, he was greatly assisted by his intercourse with literary men, and the patronage which it had long been his policy to extend to literature, — circumstances which enabled him successfully to array the thunder of the press against his devoted antagonists. The pamphlets and various political papers which were published at this juncture, although many of them openly, though insidiously, attacked the darling principles of the revolution, were, nevertheless, greedily devoured by the mass of the people, and had no slight share in effecting the fall of the great Marlborough and the ruin of the once powerful Whig party.

Partly from the tenacity with which the Whigs clung to office, and their unwillingness to act a manly and decided part, and partly from their being successfully entangled by Harley in a web of artifice, — one of the most extraordinary ever woven by a politician, — the "Whig game," as the latter styled it, was at an end. Harley, at the same time that he was the recognised leader of the Tories, had art enough to convince more than one of the Whig party that, should their

whole body desert the queen, the religion and constitution of the country would inevitably be in danger. The Duke of Shrewsbury was easily persuaded to league himself with the Tories; and the queen, without consulting her ministers, rewarded him with the post of lord chamberlain. The Earl of Sunderland, the near relation of Marlborough, was next removed, and, as this affront to the great hero excited no popular commotion, more important measures were determined upon. On a sudden, Godolphin was not only deprived of his office of lord treasurer, but the usual command to break his staff was delivered to his porter by one of the royal livery servants. The queen's note, in which she signified her pleasure to Godolphin that he should no longer direct her affairs, is too curious to be omitted:

"KENSINGTON, August 7 [1710].

"The uneasiness which you have showed for some time has given me very much trouble, though I have borne it; and had your behaviour continued the same as it was for a few years after my coming to the crown, I could have no dispute with myself what to do. But the many unkind returns I have received since, especially what you said to me personally before the Lords, makes it impossible for me to continue you any longer in my service; but I will give you a pension of four thousand a year, and I desire that, instead of

bringing the staff to me, you will break it, which, I believe, will be easier to us both."

The pension promised in this letter, Anne is said to have neglected to pay; and, according to an indorsement on the queen's note, in the handwriting of the Duchess of Marlborough, Godolphin was too proud to appeal to her for the fulfilment of her promise.

Thus was the ruin consummated of one of the greatest heroes, and one of the most powerful administrations, by means of the secret influence of a bedchamber-woman and the intriguing genius of a renegade Dissenter. Some few of the Whigs resigned their offices with decent dignity; others delayed their resignation from hopes of compromise or motives of self-interest; Halifax treated in private with Harley for his friends; the Duke of Somerset was induced to retain his post under the Tories, and the Duke of Newcastle fondly clung to his office till he was dismissed. Even Marlborough became a traitor to his friends, and continued for some time in command of the army, but it was only till he could conveniently be removed.

The result of these memorable proceedings was the elevation of Harley to the chief direction of affairs. On the 10th of August, 1710, he was appointed chancellor of the exchequer, St. John, at the same time, being made joint secretary of

state with the Earl of Dartmouth. A Tory ministry was formed without difficulty; the Parliament was dissolved, and a House of Commons returned which was entirely devoted to the new administration.

It was only a few months after the accession of Harley to office that an attempt was made by the Marquis de Guiscard on his life. According to Burnet, this profligate person had originally been an abbot in France,[1] from which country he was compelled to absent himself on account of his "enormous crimes." He subsequently rose to the rank of colonel in the British army, and distinguished himself on several occasions by his personal gallantry; more especially at the battle of Almanza, where his regiment was almost entirely cut to pieces.

These services were fairly enough considered by the adventurer as entitling him to a pension. As long, however, as the Whigs continued in power, his known intimacy with St. John and the Tories (who had probably made use of him in some of their underhand transactions) procured him but little consideration. On the accession of the Tories to power, he was destined to be scarcely more successful. St. John, who had formerly selected him, on account of his social qualities and congenial habits of dissipation, to be his boon companion, had either grown ashamed

[1] He had been Abbé de Bourlie, near Cevennes.

of his former associate, or Guiscard had given him some cause of offence. The queen, indeed, was inclined to recognise his claims, and ordered him a pension of £500 a year, but by the influence of either Harley or St. John, — Guiscard himself believed the latter, — the sum was reduced to £400, which, moreover, was not permitted to be placed on the fixed establishment, and consequently was but irregularly paid.

Stung to exasperation by repeated disappointments, as well as by the neglect and contempt which he experienced from his former friends, Guiscard (apparently aiming at the same time at revenge and advantage) offered his services to the French government, and subsequently entered into a treasonable correspondence with that country. According to the rumours of the period, his guilt was not merely confined to treachery, but it was believed that he harboured a design against the queen's person. This improbable fact, however, may reasonably be doubted. "If Guiscard," says Lord Dartmouth, "had any design upon the queen, his heart failed him; for he had been with her the evening before, and nobody in the outer room but Mrs. Fielding, or within call but Mrs. Kirk, who was commonly asleep." Under what circumstances so notorious a profligate, and so dangerous an adventurer, obtained this secret and ill-advised interview with the queen, it is now impossible to ascertain. Anne, however, informed

Lord Dartmouth that Guiscard, during his interview, confined himself to "very pressing" solicitations for an increase of his pension, and to complaints of the irregularity with which it was paid.

At all events, the fact of the adventurer's treasonable correspondence with the court of France was placed beyond the possibility of a doubt. With the cunning and experience in the arts of low intrigue of which such persons are usually masters, he adopted the precaution of addressing his communications to the French government through the circuitous route of other European countries. One of these letters, having been forwarded to a person in Portugal, fell accidentally into the hands of the British ambassador, the Earl of Portmore, who immediately transmitted it to his own government. From this period, Guiscard was closely watched; and, shortly afterward, a second packet falling into the hands of the English ministry, a warrant, signed by his old associate, St. John, was issued for his arrest.

The Frenchman, unconscious of the danger awaiting him, was walking in St. James's Park, when he was suddenly seized and disarmed by a messenger, and carried before the council, which was sitting at Whitehall. During the first moments which followed his arrest, his self-possession is said to have entirely failed him, and he passion-

ately implored the messenger to kill him on the spot. He soon, however, recovered his self-command, and, while waiting in an antechamber to be summoned before the Privy Council, contrived to secrete about his person a penknife, which he found lying among some pens in an inkstand on the table.

On being brought before the council, Guiscard behaved with the utmost coolness, and stoutly and confidently denied the charges brought against him. However, when St. John put some questions to him, which clearly proved how well informed were the government in regard to his recent proceedings, and, more particularly, when Lord Harcourt showed him one of his own letters, he entirely lost his former assurance of manner, and, after making a daring attempt to snatch the letter out of Lord Harcourt's hands, seems to have given himself up to despair.

Finding that the evidence against him was too clear to be controverted, and that in all probability he was fated to suffer an ignominious death, the Frenchman, with a desperate resolution, seems to have aimed at the last remaining alternative, revenge. The principal object of his hatred was, unquestionably, St. John, who he believed had not only deprived him of the free enjoyment of the pension granted him by the queen, but who had added insult to injury; who had first courted and then contemned him; who had formerly been his

boon companion and was now the imperious and unsparing inquisitor. St. John, during the examination, was, fortunately for himself, seated on the opposite side of the table, where it was impossible for the arm of the assassin to reach him. Guiscard, however (determined, if possible, to avail himself of this last opportunity of wreaking his vengeance on the man who he believed had most injured him), made use of some plausible arguments for inveigling him into a personal conference, urging that he had matter to communicate which should only be entrusted to St. John's private ear. This request (as Guiscard was a prisoner for high treason) was very properly refused by St. John — a circumstance to which he was apparently indebted for his life.

During his examination, Guiscard had contrived to thrust himself between the Duke of Ormond and Harley; so closely, indeed, that he might easily have drawn the sword of the former, and used it for his purposes of revenge. Either, however, in the perturbation of his thoughts, the circumstance did not occur to him, or he trusted in the insignificant weapon which he had secreted about his person. Guiscard continued so pertinaciously arguing with St. John on the necessity of granting him a private interview, that Harley, wearied with his importunities, or satisfied that the object of the investigation had been sufficiently attained, rose to ring the bell, for the

purpose of summoning the messengers to remove their prisoner. Guiscard, observing his object, remarked: "*Voilà qui est dur!—pas un mot!*" At the same time he made a step toward Harley, as if he had something to whisper in his ear. From a Frenchman's gesticulations, it is not always easy to discover whether he is an enemy or a friend. In a moment Guiscard had drawn the knife from his bosom and thrust it into the breast of the minister. The blade broke at the first thrust, but the assassin, ignorant of the circumstance, continued desperately to repeat the stroke. For a moment the members of the council were stupefied at the suddenness of the attack. St. John was the first to recover his self-possession, and made toward Guiscard. "The villain," he said, drawing his sword, "has killed Mr. Harley." The council-chamber was, of course, in an uproar. Some of the members drew their rapiers, and thrust at the defenceless assassin; others defended, or fancied they defended, themselves with chairs; while Guiscard, on his part, rushed desperately against his assailants, as if desirous of meeting his death at their hands. It was not till further assistance was obtained that the assassin was effectually secured, and conveyed to Newgate. From this period Guiscard refused all aid from medicine, and in a few days died of a mortification which ensued from one of his wounds.

CHAPTER X.

ROBERT HARLEY, EARL OF OXFORD.

Harley's Recovery from His Wound — His Firmness and Self-possession when Anticipating Death — His Popularity Increased by Guiscard's Attempt on His Life — Publicly Congratulated by the House of Commons on His Escape — His Reply — Act of Parliament Passed on the Occasion — Harley Created Earl of Oxford — Extract from Swift's Journal to Stella — Harley Appointed Lord High Treasurer, and Honoured with the Garter — Lord Dartmouth's and Lockhart's Opinions of Harley — Extracts from Spence's Anecdotes and Swift's Correspondence — Curious Anecdotes of Harley — Intrigues of St. John against Harley — The Latter's Jealousy of His Rival — Reasons of St. John's Hostility to Harley — Mrs. Masham Declares against Harley — The Queen Induced to Abandon Him — Inquiry into the Charges Brought against Him — Letter from Harley to Swift — Memorable Interview between the Queen, Mrs. Masham, Harley, and St. John — Indecent Squabble between the Parties in the Royal Presence — Harley Resigns the Post of Lord Treasurer — Accession of George the First — Harley's Sanguine Anticipations in Consequence — His Disappointment — St. John Impeached of High Treason — Harley Impeached by Lord Coningsby of the Same Crime, and Committed to the Tower — Popular Sympathy for the Fallen Minister — His Noble Conduct under Disgrace — Attempts Made by His Enemies to Delay His Trial — Feigned Quarrel between the Houses of Lords and Commons — Unanimous Acquittal of Harley — He Retires into Private Life, and Amuses Himself by Collecting the Harleian MSS., now in the British Museum — His Death.

THE wound received by Harley, though a serious, was not a dangerous one. The knife, indeed,

having broken in his breast, caused him severe pain; so much so, that he apprehended himself to be mortally wounded, and inquired of Bucier, the surgeon, whether his life was in very imminent danger. He did not fear death, he said, but he was desirous of settling his affairs. "This fearlessness of consequences," says Lord Dartmouth, "was visible by his countenance, which was not in the least altered." Swift styles him "the most fearless man alive;" and St. John, in a letter to his confidential agent, Drummond, observes: "It is impossible to express to you the firmness and magnanimity which Mr. Harley showed upon this surprising occasion. I, who have always admired him, never did it so much. The suddenness of the blow, the sharpness of the wound, the confusion which followed, could neither change his countenance, nor alter his voice." The accident, however, proved eventually of great service to Harley, by adding considerably to his popularity, which had for some time been on the wane. His assassin being a papist, he was regarded as a martyr to the Church of England; and, moreover, in consequence of the blow having been struck by a secret emissary of France, it was presumed that his zeal for the interests of his own country must have rendered him an especial object of hatred to its enemies. Thus did an accident — a blow from a disappointed maniac, whose arm was guided by motives of mere per-

sonal revenge — at once overthrow the schemes of Harley's enemies, and reëstablish him in the fulness of his power. On such trifling circumstances often rests the stability of a popular government. A dastardly assassination, the excitement caused by a royal marriage, or a successful battle, more frequently serve as props to a falling administration than acts which might deservedly claim for their promoters the blessings of mankind.

Harley, on recovering from his wounds, had little reason to complain of want of sympathy on the part of the world. Addresses had already been presented by both Houses of Parliament to the queen, which, while they deprecated the late "barbarous attempt" on her servant's life, at the same time expressed their conviction that it was Harley's fidelity to her Majesty's person, and his zeal for her service, which had drawn down upon him the hatred of all the abettors of popery and faction. The House of Commons, especially, voted that he should be publicly congratulated on his providential escape; and, accordingly, on his return to his Parliamentary duties, after a confinement of a few weeks from the effects of his wounds, the Speaker, in a formal speech from the chair, expressed to him the joyful satisfaction of the Commons of England at the preservation of "so valuable a life, upon which, under her Majesty, depended the safeguard of the religion and

constitution of the country." "Sir," concluded Harley's reply, "the undeserved favour I have received this day is deeply imprinted in my heart; and whenever I look upon my breast, it will put me in mind of the thanks due to God; my duty to the queen; and that debt of gratitude and service I must always owe to this honourable House, to you, Mr. Speaker, and to every particular member." In consequence of the recent outrage, an Act of Parliament was passed, making it felony, without benefit of clergy, to attempt the life of a Privy Councillor in the execution of his duty; a singular clause being added, which justified and indemnified such persons as had either stabbed or bruised Guiscard in the later affray.

The queen, owing to Harley's extraordinary popularity at this period, was enabled, at the same time, to gratify his ambitious views, and her own personal regard for her minister, by advancing him to the House of Lords. Accordingly, on the 24th of May, 1711, about two months after the attempt on his life, he was created Baron Harley, of Wigmore, in Herefordshire, Earl of Oxford, and Earl of Mortimer. Swift writes to Stella on the day previous: "Lewis whispered me that Mr. Harley's patent for Earl of Oxford was passed in Mr. Secretary St. John's office; so to-morrow, or next day, I suppose, he will be declared Earl of Oxford, and have the staff. This man is grown by persecutions, turnings-out, and stabbing. What

waiting, and crowding, and bowing will be at his levee! yet if human nature be capable of so much constancy, I should believe he will be the same man still, bating the necessary forms of grandeur he must keep up." Two days afterward, Swift writes to the same correspondent: "My Lord Oxford can't yet abide to be called my lord; and when I called him my lord, he called me Dr. Thomas Smith, which he always does when he has a mind to tease me. By a second hand, he proposed my being his chaplain, which I, by a second hand, excused; we had no talk of it to-day, but I will be no man's chaplain alive." On the 29th of the month, Harley was appointed Lord High Treasurer of Great Britain, and on the 26th of October, the following year, was honoured with the Garter.

Of the Earl of Oxford, as a minister and a statesman, and especially of the political events in which he was the principal actor, sufficient, perhaps, has already been said. It remains, however, for us to introduce a few remarks respecting his personal character, and his capacity to fill the high post to which cunning and intrigue, rather than individual merit, had exalted him.

The most favourable character which has been bequeathed to us of Harley is to be found among the agreeable memoranda of his friend, Lord Dartmouth. According to that nobleman, he understood and loved the constitution of his country;

was the zealous advocate of a legal, limited, and constitutional monarchy; was earnest in his contempt and dislike of "scheme-makers," and was as zealously and affectionately attached to the interests of his country as he was regardless, except where his vanity was concerned, of his own. Lord Dartmouth, however, admits that Harley's friendship was little to be trusted where it interfered with his private views, and that on such occasions he would give the preference even to an enemy.

Lockhart of Carnwath enters more closely into Harley's character, with which he could not fail to be intimately acquainted. "His natural temper," he says, "and greatest dexterity lay rather in managing and despatching mere drudgery sort of business, and in contriving snares to catch those he had a mind to undermine, than in being the chief minister of state, and prime favourite. Besides that, he was too reserved, and admitted too few into his secret designs;[1] he did not show that politeness and address so necessary in one of that high station to which he was now advanced, and seemed to affect to carry his views more by his own cunning than by the influence, weight, and authority of the Crown, and by supporting and

[1] Bolingbroke, on more than one occasion, complained bitterly of his colleague's reserve; and Lord Harcourt, though filling the high post of lord chancellor, used to observe that he knew as little of what was going on as if he had been Harley's groom.

encouraging the friends thereof. From thence it came to pass that he gained few friends, and created many personal enemies. He was, indeed, very civil to all who addressed him, but he generally either spoke so low in their ear, or so mysteriously, that few knew what to make of his replies; and, it would appear, he took a secret pleasure in making people hang on and disappointing them." Harley, however, could be social and agreeable among his particular friends; he surrounded himself with men of learning and genius; he possessed wit himself; was charmed to meet with it in others; and is said to have applauded it even when exercised at his own expense. He was invariably civil to his enemies; and, when it suited his purpose, occasionally more obliging to them than to his friends. He courted, somewhat slavishly perhaps, the good opinion of men of all parties, and as evidence of his latitudinarianism, or, at all events, of his freedom from religious prejudices, maintained chaplains of several sects in his household. His great merit seems to have been his superiority to the frowns of fortune, and the equanimity which he displayed on many trying occasions. He never permitted his temper to be ruffled by either the most aggravated insult or the most unexpected misfortune; and, to judge from his countenance and the equable placidity of his manners, he appeared to be exempt from the common ills of mortality, and alike invulnerable to

fear, passion, or even bodily pain. One of his principal failings was indecision; Swift, who was intimately acquainted with his character, styles him "the greatest procrastinator in the world."

Pope, who was the intimate associate of Harley, and who has eulogised him in some of his best verses, seems to have formed a far higher opinion of his friend as a philosopher than as a statesman. "Lord Oxford," he said, in conversation with Spence, "was not a very capable minister, and had a good deal of negligence into the bargain. He used to send trifling verses from court to the Scriblerus club almost every day, and would come and talk idly with them almost every night, even when his all was at stake. That lord talked of business in so confused a manner that you did not know what he was about; and everything he went to tell you was in the epic way, for he always began in the middle." Pope, on another occasion, observed that he was "huddled in his thoughts, and obscure in his manner of delivering them."

The fact recorded by Pope, that Harley, "when his all was at stake," was in the habit of amusing himself with scribbling idle verses and gossiping with idle wits, is corroborated by several passages in the correspondence of Swift. The latter, on one occasion, describes his patron "as being as merry and careless and disengaged as a young heir at one-and-twenty;" and in a letter to Stella, dated the 11th of October, 1711, he writes: "Lord

treasurer calls me now Doctor Martin, because martin [1] is a sort of swallow, and so is a Swift. When he and I came last Monday from Windsor, we were reading all the signs on the road. He is a pure trifler; tell the Bishop of Clogher so. I made him make two lines in verse for the Bell and Dragon; and they were rare bad ones." Swift, on another occasion, speaking conjointly of Harley and St. John, observes: "I cannot but think they have mighty difficulties upon them, yet I always find them as easy and disengaged as schoolboys on a holiday."

Of the ingenious manner in which Lord Oxford was in the habit of fighting off the importunities of those who looked up to him for advancement, more than one anecdote has been related. Lockhart of Carnwath mentions the case of a Scotchman of the name of James Anderson, — an antiquary, and apparently a man of merit, — who had been recommended to Oxford by the queen. Anne, it seems, had taken some pleasure in looking over his collection of seals and old charters; and on her mentioning his name to her minister as a person in whose advancement she took an interest, Harley affected to anticipate her wishes by observing that Anderson was the man in the whole world whom he most desired to oblige. The Scotchman, however, and his curiosities seem to have been speedily

[1] The appellation of Martinus Scriblerus was borrowed from this pleasantry of Lord Oxford.

forgotten, and consequently the suppliant for court favour, having anxiously expected a place for fourteen or fifteen months, again ventured to wait on the minister, and reminded him of his promise. Oxford admitted him to an interview, and not only gave him the kindest and most flattering reception, but paid him the high compliment of asking him for his picture, which it was his intention, he said, to place in his library, in a collection that he possessed of the portraits of other learned and ingenious men. The Scotchman now believed his fortune to be made in good earnest. The picture was sent, but he never received any favour more substantial, and at length desisted from further importunities in disgust. Lockhart informs us that from this period, when it was asked what place such a person was about to obtain at court, the answer commonly was, "A place in the treasurer's library."

Another anecdote, equally amusing, is recorded by the same writer. A person — whose name Lockhart omits to mention, but whom he represents as a wit and poet — attended one of the minister's levees, furnished with recommendatory letters from some of the most influential persons of the day. Lord Oxford's first inquiry of the candidate for court favour was, whether he understood Spanish? The poet replied in the negative, but added that he could soon make himself master of the language, — a task he speedily accomplished,

upon which he again presented himself to the minister. Oxford inquiring of him whether he had completed his labours, and being answered in the affirmative, "Well, then," he said, "you will have the pleasure of reading 'Don Quixote' in the original language, and it's the finest book in the world." According to Pope, the unfortunate hero of the tale was Rowe, the dramatic poet. "It was Lord Oxford," he says, "who advised Mr. Rowe to learn Spanish; and, after all his pains and expectation, only said, 'Then, sir, I envy you the pleasure of reading 'Don Quixote' in the original.' Was not that cruel?" Spence, who records Pope's version of the story, considers the cruelty to have been unintentional, and merely originating in the oddness of Lord Oxford's manner.

Of the circumstances which drove Harley from power, of the treachery of the queen's minion, Mrs. Masham, and the intrigues by which St. John accomplished the downfall of his former friend, there is no necessity to introduce any further details. As long as the interests of Harley and St. John were the same, as long as they continued mutually engaged in opposition to an adverse and triumphant party, they remained the models of political friendship. But their united exertions had no sooner elevated Harley to the pinnacle of power, than the restless spirit and towering ambition of St. John induced him to plot

against his colleague and his friend. He knew his talents to be superior to those of Harley; his pride shrunk from conducting the mere subordinate details of a secretary of state's office; and while there existed a chance of his becoming the leader he was naturally unwilling to play the part of an underling. Thus, partly from St. John's inordinate ambition, and partly from the effects of Harley's perpetual jealousy of his aspiring disposition, — which led him, on more than one occasion, to provoke and irritate, without effectually curbing, his refractory colleague, — we may trace the secret source of those notorious intrigues and discreditable squabbles which distinguished the last years of the reign of Queen Anne, and embittered, if they did not hasten to a close, the life of that princess.

We have the authority of the Earl of Oxford himself, that the seeds of dissension were sown between him and St. John as early as February, 1710, when, according to the treasurer's statement, St. John displayed an evident spirit of restlessness and opposition, and an inclination to raise a party for himself. This spirit of rivalship was still further excited between them the following year, in consequence of the attempt of Guiscard on the treasurer's life. Though it must have been clear, both to Harley and St. John, that the attack was entirely prompted by feelings of personal revenge, yet as it was no less evident that,

in the then feverish state of the public mind, a minister who had the good fortune to be marked out for destruction by a papist and an accredited agent of the French government must for a time become the popular idol, both parties were naturally desirous of being regarded as the Frenchman's intended victim; and, indeed, courted the distinction with feelings of almost puerile jealousy.

There were other grievances which especially rankled in the mind of St. John. Harley, when forced by circumstances to raise his colleague to the peerage, had displayed an unworthy jealousy of exalting him to the same rank with himself, and invidiously conferred on him the viscountcy, instead of the earldom, of Bolingbroke, which latter title might almost be considered as the property of the St. Johns, having recently expired in the person of Paulet St. John, the third earl.[1]

Another cause of annoyance to St. John was the circumstance of Harley refusing to confer on him the Order of the Garter, on several ribands

[1] This invidious and unwise distinction was unquestionably deeply felt by St. John. In a letter written in the year of his elevation, he writes: "To make me a peer was no great compliment when so many others were forced to be made, to gain a strength in Parliament; and since the queen wanted me below stairs in the last session, she could do no less than make me a viscount, or I must have come in the rear of several whom I was not born to follow. I own to you that I felt more indignation than ever in my life I had done; and the only consideration which kept me from running to extremities was that which should have inclined somebody to use me better."

becoming vacant in 1712, with one of which Harley chose to decorate himself. It is, indeed, from this period that we more clearly trace St. John's thorough dislike to his former friend. He became a constant attendant at Mrs. Masham's evening assemblies; he aided her, in spite of the determined opposition of Oxford, to realise a large sum of money at the public expense; and from being regarded by that lady and her royal mistress as a firebrand and a debauchee, he contrived to insinuate himself into the highest favour at court; by degrees he won over Lord Harcourt, Sir William Wyndham, and some of the most influential men of the Tory party, to his own interests; and from the insidious foe, he became the open opponent of his political chieftain.

At length Mrs. Masham was induced to declare herself openly against Oxford; and from this moment the fate of the minister was sealed. The queen, on her part, broken as she was in health and spirits, seems to have listened, in the early stages of these intrigues, with no slight uneasiness to the projects for removing her once favoured minister and friend. She could not but remember, with a feeling of gratitude, those clandestine interviews and social meetings when, cemented by a bond of common interest, they had so successfully plotted against their mutual enemies, the Whigs; she could not but feel grateful to Oxford for the

moderation of his administration, and the quiet which it had procured her; but unfortunately that quiet, and its consequent exemption from the fatigues of sovereignty, it was no longer in the power of the minister to ensure. The poor queen had again become the centre of political intrigue; Mrs. Masham was daily instilling into her the necessity of a great ministerial change; and consequently, from her ruling passion, the love of peace, Anne, with the usual weakness and, perhaps, selfishness of her character, seems to have listened at first with an unwilling, and afterward with a willing ear, to the insidious representations advanced against Oxford by his enemies.

The same secret advisers who prevailed upon the queen to part with her minister had no sooner induced her to enter fully into their views than they seem to have carefully supplied her with such arguments as were requisite to defend the step which she was determined on adopting. Accordingly, to the friends of the proscribed minister, and to such persons as she admitted to her confidence, she complained that Oxford had long neglected his official duties; that his language was confused and unintelligible; that his word was not to be depended upon; that his manners had long been personally disrespectful to her; and that he wanted even the common decency to keep the appointments which she made with him.

As regards a portion of these charges, we may

infer, from our knowledge of Oxford's character and eccentric manners, that they were not altogether without foundation. On the other hand, however, the very vague and indefinite nature of these accusations — the echo, probably, of the malicious and insidious representations of his enemies, and unsupported by any tangible evidence — affords indirect testimony that Bolingbroke and Mrs. Masham had, in fact, no substantial charges to bring against him. Oxford, it is true, was a finished dissembler, and among the webs of chicanery which he was in the habit of weaving, it may be questioned whether he did not occasionally overstep the confines of strict veracity; but that he was ever guilty of a deliberate falsehood for the purpose of advancing his own interests, there is certainly no evidence to prove. It may be true, also, that he was a sycophant, and fawned on his sovereign when out of power, and that he neglected her in a very unwarrantable manner as soon as she had assisted him in accomplishing his ends. Personal neglect is rarely forgiven by a woman, and never, perhaps, by a woman and a queen. But accusations such as these, even if true, are evidence rather of bad manners and bad taste, and of a foolish, and, perhaps, insolent security in office, than of incompetency or any criminal designs. It may be doubted, indeed, whether any measure was carried during Oxford's administration, which in any degree affords reason for

believing that he was ever wilfully heedless of the interests of his sovereign and the liberty and happiness of the subject, or neglected the welfare of his country for his own.

There is extant a letter addressed by Oxford to Swift, which is especially curious as having been written on the morning of the very day which his enemies had fixed upon to drive him from power. In this letter Oxford freely confesses that for the last twelve months his influence had been merely nominal, and, moreover, prognosticates that the next morning he would be a private person. His anticipations did not deceive him. On the evening of that day, the four most remarkable political personages of the day, namely, the queen, Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Mrs. Masham, met together in the same apartment for the last time. The queen was present as the dispenser of power; Oxford as the ruined and humbled statesman; and Bolingbroke and Mrs. Masham as the elated and insolent victors. Within the short space of three days the queen was a corpse, and Mrs. Masham a neglected and despised woman; within a few more days Bolingbroke was an exile and a proscribed man, and Oxford in the Tower.

At this memorable meeting, Oxford (either allowing his feelings of hatred and indignation to triumph over his better judgment and habitual calmness of language and manner, or else aware that his fate was sealed, and that now for the last

time it was in his power to address himself personally to his sovereign) gave vent to an almost indecent ebullition of rage and abuse. Aware that his motives had been misinterpreted, and his conduct misrepresented, he made a futile attempt to exculpate himself in the eyes of his sovereign, which was angrily retorted upon by Bolingbroke and Mrs. Masham. Argument led to recrimination; recrimination to reproaches; and reproaches to threats and personal invectives. Oxford boldly asserted that he had been made the victim of misrepresentation and lies. Regardless of the queen's presence, he accused Mrs. Masham of being the inventor of the paltry scandal which had occasioned his fall; and the same evening, when he was required to deliver up his staff of office, he indulged in an idle and unworthy ebullition of puerile rage, vowing vengeance on those who had procured his ruin; and adding, that "he would leave some persons as low as he had found them." On the 27th of July, 1714, Oxford resigned his post of lord high treasurer, and on the 1st of August following the queen expired.

The accession of George the First to the throne of England completed the political ruin of the Earl of Oxford. Although there existed no reasonable grounds for presuming him to have been implicated in the intrigues of the Jacobites for restoring the house of Stuart, yet he had been too closely connected with men who were known to have enter-

tained those dangerous designs not to render him an object of dislike and suspicion to the new sovereign. Moreover, in addition to the personal prejudices of George the First, he had to contend against the implacable hatred and malice of his old associates, the Whigs. It was unlikely that a party, which he had first deceived and deserted, and afterward ruined, should hesitate to retaliate on their arch-enemy, now that they were afforded an inviting opportunity for depriving him of the power to work them further annoyance.

Oxford, however, seems to have been blind to the danger which awaited him, and to have anticipated the accession of the house of Hanover as offering him a favourable opportunity of retrieving the position which he had lost. As it had been for some years a part of his temporising policy to negotiate secretly with the electoral family, he imagined that a long series of vows and professions must have securely purchased the gratitude of the new sovereign, and not only boasted of the credit which he was to enjoy under the new dynasty, but appears to have foolishly and confidently promised places and patronage to his former friends. To Lord Cowper he is said to have awarded the chancellorship; to Lord Dartmouth the privy seal; and to Mr. Bromley the post of secretary of state.

Bolingbroke, in detailing these evidences of Oxford's weakness, dwells with an evident and

unworthy satisfaction on the mortification and discomfiture which awaited his too sanguine opponent. "When the king arrived," he says, "Oxford went to Greenwich with an affectation of pomp and of favour. Against his suspicious character, he was once in his life the bubble of his credulity; and this delusion betrayed him into a punishment more severe, in my sense, than all that has happened to him since, or than perpetual exile. He was affronted in the manner in which he was presented to the king. The meanest subject would have been received with goodness; the most obnoxious with an air of indifference; but he was received with the most distinguishing contempt. This treatment he had in the face of the nation. The king began his reign, in this instance, by punishing the ingratitude, the perfidy, the insolence which had been shown to his predecessor. Oxford fled from court covered with shame, the object of the derision of the Whigs and of the indignation of the Tories."

On the 10th of June, 1715, Mr., afterward Sir Robert Walpole, as chairman of the secret committee for collecting evidence against the late ministry, stood up in the House of Commons, and impeached Henry, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, of high treason. After a short discussion, in which only two individuals came forward as the supporters of that extraordinary man, Lord Coningsby also stood up in his place. "The worthy chair-

man," he said, "has impeached the hand, but I impeach the head; he has impeached the clerk, and I the justice; he has impeached the scholar, and I the master. I impeach Robert, Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer, of high treason and other high crimes and misdemeanours." The motion, as in the case of Bolingbroke, was agreed to without a division, and the next day, on Oxford presenting himself in the House of Lords, his brother peers are said to have avoided him as if he had been infectious. A few days afterward, Lord Coningsby, attended by several Whig members of the House of Commons, formally impeached him of high treason at the bar of the House of Lords. A discussion took place, in which Oxford himself bore a part, which terminated by the peers ordering his committal to safe custody. He attempted to defend himself in a speech distinguished by a decent dignity of language and demeanour, and apparently with a proud consciousness of the purity of his motives, but it was evident that his enemies had prejudged him, and that they were determined, if possible, to bring him to the block. "My lords," he concluded his speech, "I am now to take leave of your lordships, and of this honourable House, perhaps for ever. I shall lay down my life with pleasure in a cause favoured by my late dear royal mistress. When I consider that I am to be judged by the justice, honour, and virtue of my peers, I shall acquiesce

and retire with great content; and, my lords, God's will be done."

After the debate was closed, the Duke of Shrewsbury acquainting the House that the prisoner was suffering much from gravel, Oxford was allowed the indulgence of remaining in his own house, under the custody of the Black Rod. On his quitting the House, he was followed by a large concourse of people, who gratified him by their shouts of "High Church and Oxford for ever." When, on the following day, he was again brought to the bar of the House of Lords, the peers (notwithstanding Doctor Mead declared that his life would be endangered by his committal to prison) decided that he should be conveyed to the Tower. He was conducted thither by another formidable assemblage of the populace, who showed, by their generous sympathy with the oppressed statesman, and by the opprobrious expressions which they heaped on the Whigs, that the opinions of the existing ministry and of their German master were widely different from those of the people of England.

The conduct of the Earl of Oxford, at this crisis of extreme difficulty and danger, assimilates rather to the conceptions which we form of the character of an ancient Roman than to that of the man who, a few months before, had clung to power with a discreditable tenacity, and had resigned it with a vulgar display of intemperate rage. Turning

from the exhortations of those friends who advised him to avoid the scaffold by flight, — diseased as he was in body and broken in his fortunes, — he trusted proudly to the integrity of his past conduct, and stood alone in the consciousness of his own innocence. "They were quite mistaken in his temper," observes Pope, "who thought to get rid of him by advising him to make his escape from the Tower. He would have sat out the storm, let the danger be what it would. He was a steady man, and had a great firmness of soul; and would have died unconcernedly, or perhaps, like Sir Thomas More, with a jest in his mouth." Oxford, with unquestionable justice, may be accused of having acted as a sycophant and a dissembler; but whatever may have been his private weaknesses or public failings, it must be admitted that his conduct under actual proscription, and with the prospect before his eyes of suffering a violent death, was deserving of the highest praise. Pope thus eulogises the philosophy of his friend:

> "A soul supreme, in each hard instance tried,
> Above all pain, all anger, and all pride;
> The rage of power, the blast of public breath,
> The lust of lucre, and the dread of death."

The result of the formal investigation into Oxford's conduct which took place seems to have been an early conviction on the minds of his enemies, as well as his friends, that no offence amount-

ing to high treason could be reasonably laid to his charge. Satisfied of this fact, his enemies would willingly have deferred the trial from time to time, and thus have indirectly doomed him to a perpetual imprisonment had not the earl himself, after a confinement in the Tower of two years, insisted on their bringing him before the tribunal of his peers. With his characteristic prudence and caution, he not only waited patiently till time should have softened the acerbity of party feeling, but preferred his application at a period when a recent change in the administration, and some dissensions among its members, added considerably to his chances of obtaining an acquittal.

The ministry no sooner found themselves compelled to bring Oxford to trial, than their object seems to have been to procure his enlargement, without provoking an investigation which, perhaps, would have been little creditable to themselves. Accordingly, by means of Walpole, a feigned quarrel was got up between the Houses of Lords and Commons, as to the manner in which the prosecution was to be conducted; the Lords, it seems, were at once for proceeding to the charge of high treason, while the Commons were desirous of regularly investigating every article in the impeachment.

On the 24th of June, 1717, the day appointed for the trial, Westminster Hall presented the stirring and magnificent scene which it usually

exhibits on such solemn occasions. The peers assembled at the appointed hour; the Commons attended as a committee of the whole House; the king, the royal family, and the foreign ambassadors were present; and, with the usual ceremony, Harley was conducted from the Tower and placed at the bar. As might have been anticipated, the dispute as to the mode of conducting the prosecution was renewed. The Lords, consequently, adjourned to their own house, and, after some discussion, announced their intention to adhere to their former resolution of proceeding at once to the articles of high treason. On this, the Commons demanded a free conference, which was refused. By degrees the dispute became more warm; the Lords sent a message to the other House that they intended forthwith to proceed with the trial, but the Commons took no notice of the intimation, and unceremoniously adjourned. On the 1st of July the Lords again took their seats in Westminster Hall; the prisoner was called to the bar; no prosecutors made their appearance, and Oxford was unanimously acquitted.

From the period of his release from the Tower, the Earl of Oxford assumed the character of a private man. He seems to have contented himself with the society of learned persons, and with the amusement of adding to his noble library, and amassing that splendid collection of manuscripts, which, with the additions made by his son, Ed-

ward, the second earl, was afterward purchased by the government, and deposited in the British Museum.

The Earl of Oxford was twice married. By his first wife (Elizabeth, sister of Thomas, first Lord Foley) he had issue, Edward, his successor, and two daughters, — Abigail, married to George, Earl of Kinnoul, and Elizabeth, married to Peregrine, Marquis of Carmarthen, afterward Duke of Leeds. The earl's second wife was Sarah, daughter of Thomas Middleton, Esq., a son of Sir Hugh Middleton, Bart., by whom he had no issue.

If we may trust the assertion of Doctor Johnson, in his fine poem, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," the last years of the fallen minister were afflicted by disease, engendered by his former attendance on courts, and by the vexations to which his ambition had subjected him.

> "What gave great Villiers to the assassin's knife,
> And fixed disease on Harley's closing life?
> What but their wish indulged in courts to shine,
> And power too great to keep, or to resign?"

Possibly, there may be more of poetic license than of severe truth in this passage; more especially, as the presumption of Oxford's bodily sufferings, and the inferences drawn from them by the poet, appear to be unsupported by any graver evidence.

The death of the Earl of Oxford took place at

his house in Albemarle Street, London, on the 21st of May, 1724, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. His remains were interred with those of his ancestors, in the vault of the family, at Brampton Brian, in Herefordshire.

CHAPTER XI.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

His Birth — Sketch of His Father, and Anecdote — St. John Educated among the Puritans — Is Sent to Eton — Sir Robert Walpole One of His Schoolfellows — Removed to Christ Church, Oxford — His Alternate Fits of Idleness and Study There — His Profligacy on Leaving College — His Unsuccessful Attempts at Poetry — Verses Addressed to Miss Clara Atkins — His Visit to the Continent, and Subsequent Marriage to the Wealthy Daughter of Sir Henry Winchescomb — His Separation from His Wife — Her Letters to Swift and Harley — St. John Enters the House of Commons, and Distinguishes Himself by His Eloquence — He Unites Himself to Harley's Party, and Is Appointed, in His Twenty-sixth Year, Secretary at War — His Respect for the Duke of Marlborough — The Duke's Kindly Feelings toward Him — His Retirement with Harley from Office — His Letter to the Duke of Marlborough — Returns with Harley to Office, and Is Appointed Secretary of State — Extract from Goldsmith's Life of Bolingbroke — Queen Anne's Dislike of St. John — Extracts from Swift's Journal to Stella — St. John's Difficulties in Negotiating the Peace of Utrecht — His Visit to Paris — Ratification of the Peace of Utrecht, and Elevation of St. John to the Peerage, by the Title of Viscount Bolingbroke.

HENRY ST. JOHN, afterward the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, was born at Battersea, in Surrey, on

the 1st of October, 1678, at a seat which had long been the manorial residence of his family. He was the eldest son of Henry St. John, afterward created Viscount St. John, by Mary, daughter and co-heiress of Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick.

Of the father of the statesman little is known. Swift, however, says of him, in one of his letters: "He is a man of pleasure that walks about the Mall, and frequents St. James's coffee-house and the chocolate-houses;" and Mrs. Manley informs us that he was "a professed spark, spruced up in cherry and other gaudy-coloured silk stockings." Like his illustrious son, he was probably a person of dissipated habits; for, in addition to the evidence of Swift, we find him tried and convicted for the murder of Sir William Estcourt, Bart., who was slain by him in a sudden quarrel. They were seated together at a social party, when, in the heat of a violent altercation which arose between them, St. John ran his sword through his friend's body before the rest of the party could interfere. The king granted him a reprieve for a long term of years, which the extreme old age he afterward attained rendered it not improbable that he would outlive. He died in the month of April, 1742, on the verge of ninety.

Bolingbroke imbibed his first principles of religion among the Puritans. It must be regarded as an unfortunate circumstance; for not only does it

seem to have violently prejudiced him ever afterward against that sect, but their unpalatable gloom and severity, and their long faces and exhortations, appear to have early sown the seeds of infidelity in his mind. His education had been entrusted to the care of his grandmother, a daughter of the celebrated Oliver St. John, chief justice under the Commonwealth, who selected for his tutor her own spiritual adviser, Daniel Burgess, a well-known fanatical preacher of his time. He seems to have been a zealous, and was, probably, a very good man, but his notions of education appear to have extended no further than enforcing on the mind of his pupil the necessity of perusing ponderous folios, and listening to eccentric exhortations. Bolingbroke, some years afterward, alluding to the commentaries of Chrysostom, observes in a letter to Pope: "He puts me in mind of a puritanical parson, Doctor Manton, who, if I mistake not (for I have not looked into the folio since I was a boy, and condemned sometimes to read it), made 119 sermons on the 119th psalm." In a letter to Swift, also, we find: "My next shall be as long as one of Doctor Manton's sermons, who taught my youth to yawn, and prepared me to be a High Churchman, that I might never hear him read, nor read him more." Bolingbroke has underrated the pious labours of Manton, for he actually composed one hundred and ninety sermons on the psalm in question, which were pub-

lished in one volume, with a portrait of the author prefixed.[1]

Bolingbroke, at an early age, was sent to Eton, where, among his schoolfellows in that classic academy, he numbered Sir Robert Walpole, afterward his bitterest political opponent. Coxe remarks, in his life of Walpole: "The parts of Mr. St. John were lively and brilliant, those of Walpole more steady. Walpole was industrious and diligent, because his talents required application; St. John was negligent, because his quickness of apprehension rendered less labour necessary."

From Eton Bolingbroke was removed to Christ Church College, Oxford, where he miserably disappointed the expectations of his friends, by preferring idleness to exertion, and dissipation to a thirst for academical honours. Bolingbroke, however, was never, at any period, entirely a debauchee. There seem to have been valuable moments, — many of them, probably, snatched even in the flush of excitement, — when, in the silence of his own chamber, he applied himself to nobler studies and more dignified pursuits. It could not, indeed, have been from mere intuition

[1] It is remarkable that Lord Mahon has fallen into the same numerical error as Bolingbroke. "Manton," says his lordship, "was a non-conforming and most voluminous divine, very worthy but a little tedious; who, being impressed with some fanciful idea as to the analogy of numbers, wrote 119 sermons on the 119th psalm!" A reprint of these sermons has recently appeared.

that he acquired that varied information which, though on some subjects more showy than substantial, others have spent years of application and anxiety in rendering themselves equally proficient. Even at this early period, he is known to have been universally admired for the subtlety of his reasoning, his amazing memory, his brilliant conversational powers, and all those personal as well as mental accomplishments which alike gave a promise of future eminence, and could not fail to ensure popularity to a young man of family and fortune, on his first entrance into the world.

For the first years after he quitted Oxford, his love of pleasure remained unsatiated, and no description could exaggerate the wild profligacy of his career. His drunken frolics were the theme of every tongue; Miss Gumley, who was said to be the most beautiful courtesan of her time, was his acknowledged mistress; his social parties were the scene of riotous license; and the most finished profligates at the court of Charles the Second could scarcely have surpassed the libertinism of his career. "His youth," says Lord Chesterfield, "was distinguished by all the tumult and storm of pleasures, in which he most licentiously triumphed, disclaiming all decorum. His fine imagination has often been heated and exhausted with his body in celebrating and deifying the prostitute of the night; and his convivial joys were pushed to all the extravagance of frantic

Bacchanals." "I have spoken to an old man," says Goldsmith, "who assured me that he saw him and one of his companions run naked through the park in a fit of intoxication; but then it was a time when public decency might be transgressed with less danger than at present." By his friends, indeed, St. John was regarded as a gifted though irregular genius; by the world, as a mere frequenter of coffee-houses, then the fashionable resort of the men of pleasure of the day.

Nevertheless, his better genius appears occasionally to have obtained the ascendant. He himself tells us, in an eloquent passage, "The love of study and desire of knowledge were what I felt all my life; and though my genius, unlike the dæmon of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often I heard him not in the hurry of those passions with which I was transported, yet some calmer hours there were, and in them I hearkened to him." But the ambition, which afterward aimed at dethroning kings, contented itself, at this period, with achieving the character of a finished rake. His object was to become the prince of debauchees, and to outstrip the oldest profligate in his iniquity; and as he possessed an adequate fortune, great personal beauty, a persuasive eloquence, and a most engaging address, we cannot wonder that he was foremost in the race.

Ambition was the ruling vice of Bolingbroke, and rendered a great mind its slave. It originated

every motive and coloured every action of his life. In the first instance, it induced him to figure as a libertine, and, in its second phasis, seems to have prompted him to seek distinction as a poet. In both cases he equally misunderstood himself. His poetry is frigid and inharmonious; it never rises above mediocrity, and usually sinks below it. "In his versification," says Goldsmith, "there is more wit than taste, more labour than harmony." Indeed, of the six poetical pieces which are known to be his production, it would be difficult to say which is the most deficient in merit. His own good sense, however, — added to the want of encouragement which his verses met with from his friend Pope, and the actual abuse which was heaped upon them by Swift, — appears to have early convinced him that his genius was ill-suited for poetry.

The most remarkable of his poetical effusions is unquestionably a copy of verses addressed "To Miss Clara A——s." The lady whom he thus honoured was a beautiful creature of the name of Clara Atkins, of very indifferent reputation, who sold oranges in the Court of Requests, then the lobby of the House of Lords, and a fashionable lounging-place of the period. Bolingbroke, it appears, had endeavoured to instil into her some feeling of self-respect, and with this view appears to have adopted the initiatory and singular method of installing her as his mistress. Proba-

bly, with the exception of Prior's Chloe, a more unworthy creature was never deified by the pen of the poet.

TO MISS CLARA A——S.

" Dear thoughtless Clara, to my verse attend,
Believe for once thy lover and thy friend.
Heaven to each sex has various gifts assigned,
And shown an equal care of human kind.
Strength does to man's imperial race belong;
To you, that beauty which subdues the strong.
But as our strength, when misapplied, is lost,
And what should save, urges our ruin most;
Just so, when beauty prostituted lies,
Of bawds the prey, of rakes the abandoned prize,
Women no more their empire can maintain,
Nor hope, vile slaves of lust, by love to reign:
Superior charms but make their case the worse,
And what should be their blessing proves their curse.
O nymph! that might, reclined on Cupid's breast,
Like Psyche, soothe the god of Love to rest;
Or, if ambition moved thee, Jove enthral,
Brandish his thunder, and direct its fall!
Survey thyself, contemplate every grace
Of that sweet form, of that angelic face;
Then, Clara, say, were those delicious charms
Meant for lewd brothels, and rude ruffians' arms?
No, Clara, no! that person and that mind
Were formed by Nature and by Heaven designed
For nobler ends: to these return, though late—
Return to these, and so avert thy fate.
Think, Clara, think, nor will that thought be vain,
Thy slave, thy Harry, doomed to drag his chain
Of love, ill-treated and abused, that he
From more inglorious chains might rescue thee:

Thy drooping health restored by his fond care,
Once more thy beauty its full lustre wear;
Moved by his love, by his example taught,
Soon shall thy soul, once more with virtue fraught,
With kind and generous truth thy bosom warm,
And thy fair mind, like thy fair person, charm.
To virtue thus and to thyself restored,
By all admired, by one alone adored,
Be to thy Harry ever kind and true,
And live for him who more than dies for you."

Whether Bolingbroke grew tired of this beautiful girl, or whether he found her incapable of moral improvement, certain it is that after a short period he allowed her to return to her original vocation of an orange-girl.

At the time when the wild frolics of St. John were the talk of the town, he could scarcely have attained the age of twenty. It was about this period that his father allowed him to pay a visit to the Continent, where he remained about two years. On his return, — whether from a desire to wean himself from his former pernicious pursuits, or whether tempted by the advantages of marrying a woman of fortune, — he united himself, in 1700, to a daughter of Sir Henry Winchescomb. Sir Henry was a descendant of the famous Jack of Newbury, — an opulent clothier in the reign of Henry the Eighth, — who, in addition to many acts of princely munificence, which are still remembered in his native town, entertained that monarch and his court with a cost and magnifi-

cence which could scarcely have been exceeded by the first noble of the day. On the marriage of St. John with the descendant of this personage, he received with her the then considerable portion of forty thousand pounds; and, in addition to this sum, afterward came into possession, by right of his wife, of some valuable estates in Wiltshire, Surrey, and Middlesex. Of this property, it may be remarked, he afterward forfeited a considerable portion in consequence of his attainder.

The marriage of Bolingbroke, though for a time it had the effect of checking him in his wild career of profligacy, yet, in the end, was productive of no beneficial effect. His love of pleasure, and especially his promiscuous admiration of women, remained unsated; and consequently, for many reasons, his union could not fail to be an unhappy one. His wife complained of his frequent infidelities, while St. John, on his part, retorted with charges of the obstinacy of her temper, and her wearisome and perpetual reproaches. These disagreeable recriminations ended, as might naturally be expected, in a separation; nor was their intercourse ever afterward renewed.

Whatever may have been the nature of the sentiments which St. John retained toward his misused wife, certain it is that her feelings in regard to him ever continued to be those of admiration, and apparently of love. Sixteen years after their marriage, and about two years after Boling-

broke's political disgrace, she thus writes to Swift, the intimate friend of her husband: "As to my temper, if it is possible, it is more insipid than ever, except in some places, and there I am a little fury, especially if they dare mention my dear lord without respect, which sometimes happens. I have not yet seen her Grace (the Duchess of Ormond), but design it in a day or two. We have kept a constant correspondence ever since our misfortune, and her Grace is pleased to call me sister." The following brief specimen of her correspondence — addressed to Lord Harley, the son of her husband's early friend — will not, perhaps, appear uninteresting to the reader. It has not, hitherto, we believe, appeared in print:

"BUCKLEBURY, August 18, 1713.

"MY LORD: — I am extremely glad to hear my lord treasurer takes care of his health. I hope he will continue to do so, for though I am a poor discarded mistress, yet my best wishes shall always attend his lordship. I beg my most humble service to him and my lady, and am, my lord, your most faithful servant,

"F. BOLINGBROKE."

[Indorsed
"Rec^{d} at Wimple, Aug. 22, 1713."]

Swift, who was intimate with Lady Bolingbroke, invariably speaks of her with respect. On

one occasion he says: "She is a great favourite of mine;" and more than once he seems to sympathise with her isolated situation and unequivocal wrongs.

Shortly after his marriage, St. John took his seat in Parliament as member for Wotton-Basset, in Wiltshire, a place where his family interest was considerable. He had now entered the proper field of his ambition, and his splendid and, perhaps, unequalled powers as an orator and a statesman began rapidly to rivet themselves on public attention. He had been in the House of Commons only a few months, when it was admitted, even by his political opponents, that his wit, eloquence, and discrimination were qualities which the House had never hitherto seen united in so extraordinary a degree in so young a person.

Although both the father and grandfather of St. John had been Whigs, and although that party were, at the period of which we speak, in power, St. John, either unwilling to join an administration of which all the higher offices were already filled, or foreseeing that the wily genius of Harley must hereafter work itself into the direction of the helm, unhesitatingly joined his fortunes to those of that celebrated man. The result proved that he acted wisely for his own interests, for on the secession of several of the high Tories from the Godolphin administration, in 1704, Harley came into power as secretary of state, and at the same time St.

John, now in his twenty-sixth year, received the appointment of secretary at war.

The Duke of Marlborough was at this period pursuing his glorious career on the Continent, and it is remarkable that the two most brilliant engagements during the whole war — the battles of Blenheim and Ramillies — took place during the time St. John was secretary at war. It was, probably, from a feeling of gratitude for the assistance rendered him by St. John, that Marlborough, notwithstanding their subsequent estrangement, ever retained a sincere affection for his younger colleague. St. John, on his part, professed, on all occasions, the warmest admiration of the duke's extraordinary talents, and "a true, unaffected love" for his person. It may be remarked that in the letter in which this phrase occurs, the following superscription was discovered in the handwriting of the Duchess of Marlborough: "'Tis certain that the Duke of Marlborough never was so kind to any man as to St. John; and I have heard my Lord Godolphin say that he never had anything to reproach himself of, in the whole time that he served the queen, but in complying with the Duke of Marlborough in doing unreasonable things, in point of money, for Mr. St. John, at the Duke of Marlborough's request." It was the duke's custom to style the former familiarly "Harry St. John," and when he lost his only son, Lord Blandford, he remarked that he had now no

comfort left but in Harry St. John, whom he loved and regarded as his own son.

On the dismissal of Harley from office in 1707, St. John, unwilling to sacrifice his principles, preferred following the fortunes of his friend, and retired with him into a private station. Moreover, on the dissolution of Parliament, he withdrew from the representation of Wotton-Basset, and passed the two years next which preceded his return to office in the severest study. To the Duke of Marlborough he writes, on the 8th September, 1709: "It is impossible, I find, to be so much out of the way as not to hear of the triumphs of your Grace's arms; the sound of them has reached even me, and, at a time when I began to forget the world, has made me think of it again with pleasure. I use the liberty which your Grace was pleased to allow me with discretion; but if I did not trouble you on this occasion, I should fail in doing justice to a heart full of joy for your success, zeal for your service, and love for your person."

Bolingbroke afterward affected to speak of his literary seclusion at this period as the most agreeable era in his existence. Swift writes to Stella, on the 12th January, 1711: "When Mr. St. John was turned out from being secretary at war three years ago, he retired to the country; there he was talking of something he would have written over his summer house, and a gentleman gave him these verses:

"'From business and the noisy world retired,
Nor vexed by love, nor by ambition fired,
Gently I wait the call of Charon's boat,
Still drinking like a fish, and loving like a goat.'"

"He swore to me he could hardly bear the jest; for he pretended to retire like a philosopher, though he was not twenty-eight years old; and I believe the thing was true, for he had been a thorough rake. I think the three grave lines do introduce the last well enough."

In 1710, St. John was again returned for the borough of Wotton-Basset; and now commenced the most important epoch of his life. On the accession of the Tories to power, Harley was appointed to the direction of affairs, with the offices of chancellor and treasurer of the exchequer; and, at the same time, St. John, in consequence of his former services and tried abilities, was advanced to the important situation of secretary of state. It was now that his splendid genius was allowed a fair field for display.

"In the capacity which he now filled," says Goldsmith, "he discovered a degree of genius and assiduity that, perhaps, have never been known to be united in one person to the same degree. The English annals scarce produce a more trying juncture, or that required such various abilities to regulate. He was then placed in a sphere where he was obliged to conduct the machine of state, struggling with a thousand various

calamities; a desperate and enraged party, whose characteristic it has ever been to bear none in power but themselves; a war conducted by an able general, his professed opponent, and whose victories only tended to render him every day more formidable; a foreign enemy possessed of endless resources, and seeming to gather strength from every defeat; an insidious alliance, that wanted only to gain the advantages of victory without contributing to the expenses of the combat; a weak, declining mistress, that was led by every report, and seemed ready to listen to whatever was said against him; still more, a gloomy, indolent, and suspicious colleague, that envied his power and hated his abilities."

The dislike that Queen Anne entertained for St. John — a circumstance which Goldsmith here enumerates as one of the numerous difficulties which he had to contend against — was occasioned by the libertine life he was known to have led. From the same cause Mrs. Masham is said to have been no less prejudiced against the young and handsome statesman; indeed, the repugnance with which he was regarded, both by his royal mistress and the reigning favourite, added to the feelings of dislike and jealousy which Harley had begun to entertain toward his younger colleague, would, not improbably, have led to his being unceremoniously removed from the ministry, had it not been for the paramount necessity of making

use of his talents in the celebrated Treaty of Utrecht, and entrusting him with the consequent mission to the court of France. Not only was he singularly well adapted, alike from the peculiar bent of his genius and his graceful and insinuating manner, to conduct a difficult and very intricate negotiation, at what was then regarded as the politest court in Europe, but he is also known to have been the only member of the administration who possessed a competent knowledge of the French language.[1]

If retirement had effected any reformation in St. John's conduct, he no sooner reappeared in public life as a minister of state than he reverted to his former irregularities. Even Swift exhibits an unwonted squeamishness when describing to Stella the champagne and burgundy suppers of the gay secretary, and the wanton conversation permitted at his table. These irregularities seem, at length, to have seriously affected St. John's health, and to have caused undeserved pain to his unhappy and neglected wife. Swift, in a letter to Stella, dated the 7th of April, 1711, observes: "I called this evening to see Mr. Secretary, who has been ill with the gravel, and pain

[1] On the accession of George the First it was surmised that, for the same reason, Mr. Wortley (the husband of the celebrated Lady M. W. Montagu), would grow into great favour with the new monarch; it seems that, with the exception of Lord Halifax, he was the only lord of the treasury who could converse with the king in French.

in his back, by burgundy and champagne, added to the sitting up all night at business. I found him drinking tea, while the rest were at champagne, and was very glad of it. I have chid him so severely that I hardly know whether he would take it well. Then I went and sat an hour with Mrs. St. John, who is growing a great favourite of mine; she goes to the bath on Wednesday, for she is much out of health, and has begged me to take care of the secretary." Three days afterward Swift writes to the same correspondent: "I went to take leave of poor Mrs. St. John, who gave me strict charge to take care of the secretary in her absence; said she had none to trust but me; and the poor creature's tears came fresh into her eyes." Four months afterward we find a still more striking notice of St. John's profligacy. "Lord Radnor and I were walking the Mall this evening," says Swift, "and Mr. Secretary met us and took a turn or two, and then stole away, and we both believe it was to pick up some wench; and to-morrow he will be at the cabinet with the queen: so goes the world!"

Swift, about this period, draws the following portrait of his gifted and mercurial friend: "I think Mr. St. John the greatest young man I ever knew: wit, capacity, beauty, quickness of apprehension, good learning, and an excellent taste; the best orator in the House of Commons, admirable conversation, good nature, and

good manners; generous, and a despiser of money. His only fault is talking to his friends in way of complaint of too great a load of business, which looks a little like affectation; and he endeavours too much to mix the fine gentleman with the man of business. What truth and sincerity he may have, I know not. He is now but thirty-two, and has been secretary above a year. He turns the whole Parliament, who can do nothing without him." Bolingbroke himself frequently complains in his letters that, on post-days, he is unable to lay down his pen the whole day, and that he is constantly detained at his office for two whole days together. Swift once remarked to him: "You were always my hero;" and in a letter to Stella he says: "I have told him sometimes that, if I were a dozen years younger, I would cultivate his favour, and trust my fortune with his."

The chief objects to which the labours of St. John were directed in conducting the Treaty of Utrecht, and to the accomplishment of which the whole powers of his vigorous mind were directed, were the recall of the Duke of Marlborough from Flanders, and the bringing to a close a protracted war, which, in the eyes of half England, had now reduced the country to a condition verging on bankruptcy and ruin. Without the slightest desire to defend the Peace of Utrecht as either a wise or an honourable measure, it is,

nevertheless, impossible to overrate the steadiness and ability which Bolingbroke displayed in the progress of the negotiations, nor would it be easy to exaggerate the various obstacles and difficulties he was destined to encounter at every step. The number of conflicting interests engaged throughout the different courts of Europe, the enmity and jealousy with which each regarded the claims of the other, and the utter impossibility of giving satisfaction to all, rendered the pending negotiation one of the most complicated and difficult of any recorded in history.

At home Bolingbroke had to encounter, almost single-handed, the entire influence and genius of the Whig party, with the great Duke of Marlborough at their head. The Whigs were naturally anxious to keep their favourite general employed; they contended, moreover, against a measure which they conscientiously believed to be an unwise one, and they contended the more fiercely, because party interests and prejudices were deeply and acrimoniously concerned.

Abroad, the difficulties which Bolingbroke had to contend against were even more dispiriting. Our allies, the Dutch, perceiving what important advantages were to be reaped by being led to the field by so successful a general as the Duke of Marlborough, were, of course, unwilling to terminate a war which they foresaw must be sufficiently advantageous to themselves, while it

was carried on chiefly at the expense of the English nation. There were, moreover, other conflicting interests engaged, and other intrigues at work; and, of all the European countries that had borne a part in the late hostilities, France and England alone appear to have been sincerely and heartily desirous of bringing hostilities to a close, and of enjoying once more the advantages of peace.

As a first step toward the accomplishment of the desired peace, a secret negotiation had been set on foot between the courts of Versailles and St. James, which was commenced, on the part of England, by sending over the celebrated poet, Prior, to Paris. Prior returned in due time, accompanied by M. Mesnager, as agent of the French government. The secrecy, however, with which the ministry were compelled to conduct their proceedings appears to have excited considerable alarm at the period, without being recompensed by any adequate advantages. Treaty followed treaty, and negotiation succeeded to negotiation, but still with the same dispiriting prospect of ultimate discomfiture; and yet throughout this busy and harassing period, notwithstanding the repeated failure of his favourite schemes, we find the mind of St. John still buoyant under disappointment, and his powers cheerfully opposing themselves to the host of difficulties which encountered him. Placing the most perfect confi-

dence in the genius and resources of his own mind, we find him at one time conducting the complicated machinery of foreign politics; at another crushing the machinations of his enemies in Parliament; and in the midst of this hurry and variety of employments, contributing to the periodical papers of the day, replying to the arguments and invectives of the Whig writers, and clearly demonstrating to the nation how much the burden of the war rested upon England, and how little was sustained by the Dutch, who alone reaped the advantages of its continuance.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary personal exertions of St. John, the negotiations continued to be tediously protracted till the month of July, 1712, when he was himself sent to Paris to conduct the treaty in person, and to counteract the intrigues and opposition of the Dutch. His instructions were, to endeavour "to remove all difficulties and differences that might obstruct the general suspension of arms between England and France from taking place, or settling the treaty of peace in such a course as might bring it to a happy and speedy conclusion." It was a singular circumstance, as related to Spence by St. John himself, that, in the three weeks which preceded his departure on his memorable mission, he made himself sufficiently master of Spanish to be able to read and answer letters in that language.

St. John was not only received by the French

king with the most distinguished marks of respect, but, in the gay circles of Paris, homage was universally paid to his graceful manners and brilliant abilities. In Paris, as in London, he sought to combine the character of a fine gentleman with the reputation of being a man of business; and, at the same time that he conducted the object of his mission with all the address and ability which his friends had anticipated from him, he rendered himself no less an object of general curiosity by his gaiety, his libertinism, and his wit.

St. John, having at length successfully performed the object of his mission, took leave of the French king, Louis the Fourteenth, on the 27th of August, on which occasion that magnificent monarch presented him with a diamond ring valued at about four thousand pounds sterling.[1] Within a few months, treaties of peace

[1] The apartment at Versailles (well known as the *Cabinet du Roi*), in which Bolingbroke received his celebrated audiences with Louis the Fourteenth, is of itself a history. It was here that he used to discuss the merits of his magnificent schemes with his ministers, Colbert, Louvois, and Torcy. Here he took leave of Marshal Villars, when the fate of his monarchy depended on the ensuing campaign. It was here that he introduced to the grandees of Spain, his grandson, the Duke d'Anjou, as their king. Here Louis the Fifteenth signed the treaty which expelled the Jesuits; and, finally, it was in a recess of one of the windows of this room that Louis the Sixteenth received from the Marquis de Dreux-Brézé the celebrated reply of Mirabeau, that "the Deputies of the States were assembled by the will of the people, and would not leave their place of meeting except by the force of his master's bayonets."

and commerce were signed between France and England, the ratification of which is known by the name of the Peace of Utrecht. St. John received all the applause which his talents and exertions merited; and these were considered so extraordinary that even his enemies, while they violently opposed his measures, could not but acknowledge the greatness of his genius. In July, 1712, he was created Baron St. John of Lydiard Tregoye, in Wiltshire, and Viscount Bolingbroke; and the same year was appointed lord lieutenant of the county of Essex. His father is said to have remarked to him, on hearing of his son's intended elevation to the peerage: "Ah! Harry, I always said you would be hanged, but now I find you will be beheaded."

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

St. John's Taste for Literary Society and Patronage of Dryden — His Generosity to Literary Men — Extracts from Spence's Anecdotes of Pope — Mutual Admiration of Pope and St. John — St. John's Subsequent Attempts to Blast the Poet's Memory — Probable Reasons for His Vindictiveness — Gradual Estrangement between Harley and St. John, and Causes of Their Estrangement — St. John's Letters to the Earl of Strafford and Sir William Wyndham — St. John's Ambitious Hopes Disappointed by the Death of Queen Anne — Extract from His Letter to Swift on the Occasion — Accession of George the First — Earl of Dorset Despatched to Hanover to Convey to Him the News of His Accession — Addison Appointed Secretary by the Regency — Insults Offered to St. John — His Dignified Equanimity — His Letters to Swift and Lord Strafford — Dismissed from All His Employments — Harley's Humiliating Reception by George the First — St. John's Delight at His Rival's Mortification — He Is Threatened with Impeachment, and Escapes from England in the Disguise of a Servant — Curious Letter Respecting His Flight — Letter from St. John to Lord Lansdowne, Dated from Dover — Violence of His Enemies in Parliament.

THE fact is, unquestionably, to Bolingbroke's credit, that amidst the multiplicity of his political engagements and the harassing nature of his duties as a statesman, he still found leisure to enjoy the society and to cultivate the friendship of literary

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke.
Photo-etching after the painting by **Kneller.**

men. Even in the midst of his early debaucheries, he had given evidence, by the eagerness with which he had courted the acquaintance of the immortal Dryden, that a want of taste was not among his failings. St. John, though at the time of the poet's death he could only have entered into his twenty-second year, is, nevertheless, confidently asserted to have been "the patron, the friend, and the protector of that great poet," and Pope says, in his epistle to Doctor Arbuthnot:

> "And St. John's self, great Dryden's friend before,
> With open arms received one poet more."

Later in life, Bolingbroke formed one of a splendid galaxy of genius, in which his own star was not the least dazzling. Pope, Swift, Atterbury, Prior, Parnell, Gay, Arbuthnot! when will so brilliant a circle again assemble beneath the same roof, or join in social converse beside the same hearth? Bolingbroke, to his credit, was the friend of literary men; and, in addition to his having opened his purse, or extended his patronage, to a host of writers whose names are no longer interesting to posterity, it may be mentioned that Dryden, Prior, Gay, and Thomson received substantial favours at his hands. Neither does a contrariety of political opinion appear to have made the slightest difference in his liberality, when the object was a deserving one. Steele, though closely leagued with the opposite party, experienced proofs

of his kindness, and Swift seldom importuned him in vain in favour of a suffering Whig. He forgot even the politics of Addison in his admiration of his genius; and on the first night on which "Cato" was represented on the stage, not only induced a large number of friends to accompany him to the theatre, but liberally rewarded Booth, the actor, for his splendid personification of the hero. So great was his admiration of Booth, both as an actor and as a social companion, that during several nights in every week his chariot was seen waiting at the door of the theatre, in order to convey the performer, after the play was over, to the country-seat of his patron.

The admiration which Pope entertained of Bolingbroke's genius was not confined to mere poetical rhapsodies. "Lord Bolingbroke," he said, "is much the best writer of the age. Nobody knows half the extent of his excellence but two or three of his most intimate friends. Whilst abroad, he wrote a consolation to a man in exile, so much in Seneca's style, that was he living now among us, one should conclude that he had written every word of it." Again, Pope observed to Spence: "There is one thing in Lord Bolingbroke which seems peculiar to himself. He has so great a memory, as well as judgment, that if he is alone and without books, he can sit down by himself, as another man would in his study, and refer to his books on such a particular subject in them,

in his own mind, and write as fully on it as another would with all his books about him. He sits like an intelligence, and recollects all the questions within himself." [1] Pope admitted to Spence that Bolingbroke had supplied him almost entirely with the thoughts and arguments contained in his great moral poem, and that, in addition to their frequent conversations, he had sent him seven or eight sheets of writing on the subject, which became the framework of the poem. Lord Bathurst also mentioned, in conversation with Doctor Blair, that "he had read the MS. in Lord Bolingbroke's handwriting, and was at a loss whether most to admire the elegance of Lord Bolingbroke's prose, or the beauty of Mr. Pope's verse." A room is still pointed out, in what remains of Bolingbroke's house, at Battersea, as that in which Pope composed his "Essay on Man."

If Bolingbroke admired Pope as a poet, Pope no less venerated Bolingbroke as a philosopher; their friendship and their mutual admiration of each other continued to the last; and when Pope was on his death-bed, the well-known circumstance of Bolingbroke weeping over the bard of his idolatry, and the friend of his choice, affords an affect-

[1] Pope observed at another time: "Lord Bolingbroke is something superior to anything I have seen in human nature. You know I don't deal much in hyperboles. I quite think what I say."

ing and beautiful picture. Spence, who was present at the scene, describes him as leaning over Pope's chair in a "melancholy attitude," and frequently exclaiming, amidst his sobs and tears, "Ah, Great God, what is man!" "When I was telling his lordship," adds Spence, "that Mr. Pope, on every catching and recovering of his mind, was always saying something kindly either of his present or absent friends, and that this, in some cases, was so surprising, that it seemed to me as if his humanity had outlived his understanding, Lord Bolingbroke said, 'It has so,' and then added, 'I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or a more general friendship for mankind. I have known him these thirty years, and value myself more for that man's love and friendship than —'" Here Bolingbroke is described by Spence as sinking his head, and losing his voice in hysterical sobs.

We cannot but regret that there should have appeared an afterpiece to this pathetic scene, which detracts considerably both from its moral and dramatic effect. It is almost needless to add that we allude to the well-known breach of confidence and friendship which Bolingbroke subsequently discovered that the deceased poet had committed. Bolingbroke, it seems, had entrusted to his friend's keeping the manuscript of his celebrated essay, "The Patriot King," with the understanding that only a few copies should be

printed for private distribution. Pope, on the other hand, caused a large edition to be struck off, of fifteen hundred copies, which, at the time of his death, remained in the hands of the printer.

Such is the brief outline of a singular story, which long constituted the gossip of every literary circle, and, at the time when it transpired, gave rise to more than one angry pamphlet and fiery retort. According to the confident assertions of the enemies of Pope, it was the intention of the poet, in the event of his surviving Bolingbroke, either to have published the work as his own, or to have realised a large sum of money by disposing of an eighteen-penny pamphlet at a guinea a copy. These unlikely suppositions, however, are indignantly repelled by Warburton. He affirms that Pope had no other motive than to perpetuate a valuable work, which might otherwise have been lost to posterity; he shows how improbable it was, for many reasons, that the poet could ever have entertained an intention of declaring himself the author of the work, and he adds that, as there was evidently but little likelihood of his surviving Bolingbroke, the charge of avarice was put entirely out of the question.

Whatever may have been Bolingbroke's private impressions in regard to the motives of Pope's conduct, his anger and indignation certainly carried him beyond all bounds of decency. "His thirst of vengeance," says Doctor Johnson, "in-

cited him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last struggles; and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the public, with all its aggravations." The "tale" in question, which appeared in the form of a preface to a revised edition of "The Patriot King," would be looked upon but as a piece of mere impertinence had it issued unauthorised from the hireling pen of Mallet; but having been unquestionably permitted by, if it did not originate in Bolingbroke, we cannot regard it as other than a most unjustifiable act. In the work in question, Mallet more than once speaks contemptuously of Pope as "this man;" and yet that this miserable tirade obtained the approval of Bolingbroke, and received more than one tinge of bitterness from his pen, is proved by the original manuscript draft, in the British Museum, where frequent alterations occur in the handwriting of the latter.

There are two circumstances to which Bolingbroke's vindictiveness has been attributed, and in neither instance are they very creditable to him as a philosopher. It seems, in the first place, that in the copies of "The Patriot King" which Pope had caused to be printed there were discovered several amendments and omissions which were little likely to be acceptable to Bolingbroke as an author. The remaining cause of offence was the circumstance of Pope having preferred Warburton to be

his executor and the editor of his works, Warburton, as is well known, being regarded by Bolingbroke with invincible detestation. Such are the circumstances which, as far as Bolingbroke is concerned, were the occasion of this memorable quarrel, — circumstances which, if they throw suspicion on the character and motives of Pope, must be admitted to be at least equally discreditable to Bolingbroke. But it is time to revert to his history as a statesman, and to the stirring events in which he was so conspicuous an actor.

After the successful termination of the Treaty of Utrecht, Bolingbroke had sufficient leisure to attend to what was passing at home, and to engage in private animosities and selfish intrigues. The friendship which had existed between Harley and himself had gradually subsided into coolness, and latterly had passed from coolness into absolute dislike. Whatever may have been the secret history of their first dissensions, it was unquestionably the fact that Bolingbroke was envious of the exalted position of Harley, and that Harley was morbidly jealous of the abilities of Bolingbroke. To this unfortunate disagreement, not only their own personal interests, but those of their royal mistress, and the safety of their mutual friends, were in the end miserably and shamefully sacrificed.

Bolingbroke's account of his feelings at this period, his hatred of his colleague, his estimate of

his own services, and his defence of his political conduct, may be gleaned from his epistolary correspondence. The circumstance which appears to have principally rankled in his mind was the queen's refusal — of course, at the instigation of Harley — to confer on him the Order of the Garter; the denial which he met with being rendered the more unpalatable, in consequence of there being vacant, at the time, as many as six ribands, one of which Harley chose to confer upon himself. After twelve years' laborious service, and after the talent he had displayed in conducting the Treaty of Utrecht, as well as in leading the House of Commons, he had certainly some right to expect the gratitude both of his sovereign and his colleagues. The queen, indeed, had rewarded him with a peerage; but the honour, after all, was an empty one. His elevation, inasmuch as it removed him from his proper sphere, the House of Commons, is usually alluded to by him rather as a degradation than as a reward.

In a letter addressed to the Earl of Strafford, dated 23d July, 1712, Bolingbroke thus eloquently describes his feelings: "I am to thank you, my lord, for the very kind part which you took in the honour her Majesty was very lately pleased to confer on me. It would ill become the friendship I profess to you if I did not naturally own what passes in my soul upon this subject, and confess to you what I will do to no one else, that my

promotion was a mortification to me. In the House of Commons I may say that I was at the head of business; and I must have continued so, whether I had been in court or out of court. There was, therefore, nothing to flatter my ambition in removing me from thence, but giving me the title which had been many years in my family,[1] and which reverted to the Crown about a year ago, by the death of the last of the elder house. To make me a peer was no great compliment when so many others were forced to be made to gain a strength in Parliament; and since the queen wanted me below stairs in the last session, she could do no less than make me a viscount, or I must have come in the rear of several whom I was not born to follow. Thus far there seems to be nothing done for my sake, or as a mark of favour to me in particular; and yet farther her Majesty would not go without a force which never shall be used by me. I own to you that I felt more indignation than ever in my life I had done; and the only consideration which kept me from running to extremities was that which should have inclined somebody to use me better. I knew that any appearance of breach between myself and the lord treasurer would give our common enemies spirit; and that if I

[1] The earldom of Bolingbroke had recently become extinct by the decease of Paulet St. John, the third earl, who died unmarried, 17th October, 1711.

declined serving at this conjuncture the home part of the business would, at least for some time, proceed but lamely."

Bolingbroke, in his celebrated letter to Sir William Wyndham, refers, in no less eloquent language, to the unworthy treatment which he had experienced at the hands of his early friend. After haughtily recapitulating the services which he had performed for his party, and showing how much the success which had attended their measures was the result of his personal exertions, he proceeds: "I was dragged into the House of Lords in such a manner as to make my promotion a punishment, not a reward, and was there left to defend the treaties almost alone. It would not have been hard to have forced the Earl of Oxford to use me better. His good intentions began to be very much doubted of. The truth is, no opinion of his sincerity had ever taken root in the party, and (which was worse, perhaps, for a man in his station) the opinion of his capacity began to fall apace. In the House of Commons his credit was low, and my reputation very high. You know the nature of that assembly; they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged. The thread of the negotiations, which could not stand still a moment without going back, was in my hands; and before another man could have made himself master of the business, much time

would have been lost, and great inconveniences would have followed. Some, who opposed the court soon after, began to waver then; and if I had not wanted the inclination, I should have wanted no help to do mischief. I knew the way of quitting my employments, and of retiring from court, when the service of my party required; but I could not bring myself up to that resolution when the consequence of it must have been the breaking up of my party, and the distress of the public affairs. I thought my mistress treated me ill; but the sense of that duty which I owed her came in aid of other considerations, and prevailed before my resentment." Bolingbroke afterward adds, — and his language forcibly conveys the tone of his indignant feelings, — "I began in my heart to renounce the friendship which, till that time, I had preserved inviolable for Oxford. I was not aware of all his treachery, nor of the base and little means which he employed then, and continued to employ afterward, to ruin me in the opinion of the queen and everywhere else. I saw, however, that he had no friendship for anybody; and that, with respect to me, instead of having the ability to render that merit which I endeavoured to acquire an addition of strength to himself, it became the object of his jealousy, and a reason for undermining me. In this temper of mind I went on, till the great work of the peace was consummated, and a treaty signed at Utrecht;

after which, a new and more melancholy scene for the party, as well as for me, opened itself."

By this statement, it would appear that Harley was ready enough to make use of talents of which he was secretly in dread; and, moreover, that instead of rewarding services for which he had so long been a debtor, he adopted the most unfair methods of undermining the credit of his colleague and keeping his abilities in the background. In a word, if we may believe Bolingbroke, the memorable feud between Harley and himself is solely attributable to an unworthy feeling of jealousy on the part of his former friend. Had the latter told his own tale, the version would probably have been a very different one. That Harley, indeed, dreaded the aspiring genius of Bolingbroke, and endeavoured, by every method, to keep him in the subordinate ranks of the administration, instead of exalting him into an equal, is far from an improbable solution of this unworthy squabble. But, from the insight which we possess into the ambitious character of Bolingbroke, and his love of intrigue, we can well believe that, in the great game of ministerial rivalship, the first move was made by himself, and that Harley, perceiving he must either effect the humiliation of a false friend, or consent to his own inevitable disgrace, chose, as was natural, the former alternative.

The history of the rivalship between Harley and Bolingbroke having been related elsewhere,

there is no necessity to repeat the details on the present occasion. It is sufficient to say that Bolingbroke leagued himself with Mrs. Masham, and thus succeeded in procuring Harley's dismissal. The latter quitted office with a prophecy, which, though couched in homely language, proved not the less true. "Some of them," he said, "will smart for it." Bolingbroke, on the other hand, is said to have been unable to conceal the satisfaction that he felt at the fall of his former friend, and even to have celebrated his victory with an unseemly banquet.[1]

If Bolingbroke entertained any hopes of succeeding to the post of his defeated enemy; if, as appears unquestionable, his intrigues centred principally in this object, he was destined to be signally disappointed. His triumph, indeed, was of short duration. One of the last acts of Queen Anne's life was to nominate the Duke of Shrewsbury to the appointments of lord treasurer, lord chamberlain, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. This occurred on the 30th of July, 1714, and on the 1st of August the queen expired.

With the death of Queen Anne expired also all the ambitious hopes and magnificent projects of Bolingbroke. He sunk at once from being the

[1] The party invited by him on the occasion are said to have been Generals Cadogan, Stanhope, and Palmer, Sir William Wyndham, and Craggs. They met at Bolingbroke's London residence in Golden Square.

victorious statesman and the admired orator, into the character of a dangerous projector and a ruined politician. His own comment on this extraordinary vicissitude affords, perhaps, the best moral to the tale. To Swift he writes, two days after the death of Anne: "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the queen died on Sunday; what a world is this, and how does it banter us!" Unlike his rival, Oxford, however, his genius seemed to rise with the occasion: "I have lost all," he writes, "by the death of the queen, but my spirit, and I protest to you that I feel that increase upon me."

The accession of George the First to the throne was a death-blow to the hopes of the Tory party in England. The regency immediately despatched the Earl of Dorset to Hanover, to carry to the elector the news of his accession, and to attend him on his journey to England. Bolingbroke, at this juncture, would probably have gladly resigned the post of secretary, but till the arrival of the new king it was imperative on him to discharge the duties of the office. In the meantime the regency, with an unworthy triumph, lost no opportunity of mortifying a fallen man. They not only appointed a secretary of their own, — the celebrated Addison, — but also gave directions that all letters addressed to the secretary of state should be sent to the secretary of the regency. Moreover, while the members were engaged in deliberating, Boling-

broke, with his bag of papers in his hand, was compelled to wait every morning in the passage among the servants, where, it is said, there were persons stationed purposely to insult and deride him.

Disinclined as we are to place implicit faith in those professions of philosophy, of which Bolingbroke so often makes a parade in his writings, it is, nevertheless, incumbent upon us to do justice to the equanimity which he displayed at this trying juncture, and to the dignity with which he endured the paltry insolence of his successors. Although he and his party were regarded in the light of state criminals; though he was avoided as a plague-spot in political circles; though shunned by former friends, and surrounded by a host of powerful enemies, he exhibited a proud bearing, and an apparent consciousness of the rectitude of his motives, which exalted him high above the ignoble malice of those whose aim it was to humble him to the dust. To Swift he writes, on the 11th of August, 1714, ten days after the death of the queen: "Adieu, love me; and love me better, because, after a greater blow than most men have felt, I keep up my spirit; am neither dejected at what has passed, nor apprehensive at what is to come: *meâ virtute me involvo.*" Again, he says, in a letter to Lord Strafford: "For my own part, I doubt not but I have been painted in fine colours to the king. I must trust to my conduct to clear me. I served

the queen to the last gasp as faithfully, as disinterestedly, as zealously as if her life had been good for twenty years, and she had twenty children to succeed her. I do not repent doing so, nor envy those who did otherwise. On the same principle will I serve the king, if he employs me; and, if he does not, I will discharge my duty honestly and contentedly in the country, and in the House of Peers."

At length, on the 31st of August, despatches were received from George the First at The Hague, one of which directed a patent to be prepared, conferring the dignity of Prince of Wales on the electoral prince, while another ordered the instant dismissal of Bolingbroke from all his employments. He quitted London as soon as the state of his affairs would permit him, but was allowed to remain only a short period unmolested. On the arrival of George the First in England, he received a message to attend at the secretary's office, in order to be present when the seals should be removed. This summons he excused himself from obeying, affirming that the ceremony might quite as well be performed by one of the under-secretaries; at the same time he solicited the honour of kissing the king's hand, —a request which, as he probably anticipated, was refused.

This honour, which was unhesitatingly denied to Bolingbroke, was awarded, though with a bad

grace, to the Earl of Oxford. The latter, who had flattered himself that he was to receive the warmest reception from the new king, and had even made some foolish promises to his friends on the strength of this expected favour, had hastened, immediately on the king's landing at Greenwich, to catch the first rays of the rising sun. The reception which he met with was humiliating in the extreme; and we may observe that, though there existed an almost fraternal community of suffering between Bolingbroke and himself; though it was of the utmost importance, not only for their joint interests, but in all probability for the preservation of their lives and fortunes, that they should unite in the same cause, and adopt the same line of defence against the impending attack of their enemies; yet so steadfast was Bolingbroke in his hatred of his rival, that the signal mortification of Oxford, at Greenwich, appears almost to have made amends to him for his personal misfortunes. Speaking of the discomfiture of his former col league, he says: "The king began his reign, in this instance, by punishing the ingratitude, the perfidy, and the insolence which had been shown to his predecessors. Oxford fled from court covered with shame, the object of the derision of the Whigs, and of the indignation of the Tories." Again, he says, in his letter to Sir William Wyndham, "I abhorred Oxford to that degree, that I could not bear to be joined with him in any case."

These passages require no comment. They are the last mention we shall have to make of a political quarrel, — one of the most important, in its results, of any recorded in modern history.

In the meantime, such documents as had reference to the recent negotiations for peace were carefully collected by the government; and a committee, consisting of twenty persons, was appointed to select such passages from them as might best serve as articles of accusation against the late ministry. Not even the private papers of the deceased queen were held sacred against the rage of party; and it was evident, from this stretch of power, as well as from the fury with which the persecution was conducted, that England was no longer a safe residence for Bolingbroke. He himself informs us: "In the king's first speech from the throne all the inflaming hints were given, all the methods of violence were chalked out to the two houses. The first steps in both were perfectly answerable, and to the shame of the peerage be it spoken, I saw at that time several lords concur to condemn in one general vote all that they had approved of in a former Parliament by many particular resolutions. Among several bloody resolutions proposed and agitated at this period, the resolution of impeaching me of high treason was taken." Threatened with this imminent danger, with little likelihood of being

allowed a fair field in which to defend himself, and assured that his enemies would unscrupulously pursue him to the scaffold, the only hope of safety remaining to him was flight.

The circumstances of his escape render it not a little interesting. After commenting in all circles on the elaborate defence which it was his intention to make, he appeared publicly on the night of the 25th of March, 1715, at Drury Lane Theatre, and, at the close of the performance, bespoke a particular play for the ensuing night. From the theatre he proceeded to his own house, where he disguised himself in a large coat and black wig, and in the character of a servant of a M. La Vigne, one of the messengers of the French king, proceeded to Dover, from whence he crossed over in a small vessel to Calais.

One Captain Morgan of the marines, who had been principally instrumental in his flight, was afterward arrested and examined before the Privy Council; but little was elicited from him beyond what has already been related. There appeared in print, however, a curious letter, by which it seems that Bolingbroke had a narrow escape from the port officers at Dover, who abruptly entered an apartment in which he was anxiously waiting a change of the tide, without, however, suspecting his identity. "No sooner were the officers gone," says the writer, "than they went off in the bay on board the vessel, which was in the road. And

now, my lord, whom nobody in the house had seen before, was forced to appear. He had got on a very black wig and a riding-coat, which he buttoned over his wig, and covered the lower part of his face. He carried on his shoulders a pair of leathern bags, and affected a clownish, country air in his walking, though nobody suspected him till he was gone off, and then some of the seamen fancied they knew him. He arrived at Calais about eight o'clock Sunday night, and there the governor's coach attended him on his arrival, and then the man with the riding-coat and black periwig was known to be the Right Honourable the Lord Bolingbroke. Yesterday Captain Morgan and the two Galways returned, and finding it was known they had conveyed over my lord, they grew very insolent, and came to poor George Slater, and bullied him, and told him, had he not been a common councilman, they would have whipped him around the market for an informing rogue."

As soon as it was publicly known that Bolingbroke had quitted England, copies of the following letter, the original of which was said to have been addressed to Lord Lansdowne, were carefully handed about the London coffee-houses and other places. The authenticity of this remarkable document was doubted at the time, but it is now known to have been, unquestionably, the production of Lord Bolingbroke's pen.

"DOVER, 27th March, 1715.

"MY LORD: — I left the town so abruptly that I had no time to take leave of you or any of my friends. You will excuse me when you know that I had certain and repeated informations, from some who are in the secret of affairs, that a resolution was taken by those who have power to execute it to pursue me to the scaffold. My blood was to have been the cement of a new alliance, nor could my innocence be any security, after it had once been demanded from abroad and resolved on at home that it was necessary to cut me off. Had there been the least reason to hope for a fair and open trial, after having been already prejudged unheard by two houses of Parliament, I should not have declined the strictest examination. I challenge the most inveterate of my enemies to produce any one instance of a criminal correspondence, or the least corruption of any part of the administration in which I was concerned. If my zeal for the honour and dignity of my royal mistress and the true interests of my country has anywhere transported me to let slip a warm or unguarded expression, I hope the most favourable interpretation will be put upon it. It is a comfort that will remain with me in all my misfortunes that I served her Majesty faithfully and dutifully in that especially which she had most at heart, relieving her people from a bloody and expensive war, and that I have also been too much an Eng-

lishman to sacrifice the interest of my country to any foreign ally; and it is for this crime only that I am now driven from thence. You shall hear more largely from me shortly.

"Yours, etc."

This spirited appeal was affected to be regarded by his enemies as a gross insult to the two houses of Parliament, and, moreover, his flight was construed into evidence of, what they were pleased to call, his guilt. The preparations for his impeachment were hurried with increased alacrity; scarcely a voice was raised in his favour in either house of Parliament; those whom he had formerly silenced by his eloquence, or galled by his sarcasms, now furiously pressed on the absent statesman; and it was evident that, though his enemies had been defrauded of the blood of their arch-enemy, they were determined to pursue him to his irremediable ruin.

CHAPTER XIII.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

The Whigs Attempt to Prejudice the King against the Tories — Walpole, Afterward Sir Robert, Chairman of the Secret Committee against St. John, Presents the Report of the Committee to the House of Commons — Nature of the Charges against St. John — Walpole Formally Impeaches St. John of High Treason — His Violent Speech on the Occasion — Its Effect on the House of Commons — Mr. Hungerford and General Ross Attempt St. John's Defence — The Latter's Embarrassment — Remarks on the Charges against St. John — He Is Degraded from His Nobility, and Sentenced to Death Should He Return to England — Strong Protest in the Lords against These Penalties — Bill Passes the Lords and Receives the Royal Assent — Remarks on the Charge against St. John of Having Made Treasonable Overtures to the Stuarts — St. John's Forlorn Condition in France — He Is Visited by an Emissary of the Pretender, and Accepts the Seals under That Prince — His First Interview with Him — St. John's Promise to Lord Stair, and Violation of It — Rebellion of 1715 — St. John's Interview with the Pretender at St. Germains — Is Dismissed from His Service — His Reply to the Charge Brought against Him, of Neglecting to Send Gunpowder to Scotland — Letter from Lord Stair to Walpole — St. John's Love Intrigues While in France — French Lines on the Subject — Duke of Berwick's Testimony to St. John's Zeal in the Cause of the Pretender — His Second Marriage to a Niece of Madame de Maintenon — Curious Anecdote of His Jealousy of a Rival — Character of His Second Wife — His Purchase of a Small Estate near Orleans — Voltaire's Visit to Him.

ADMITTING that the conduct of Bolingbroke as a minister was not altogether blameless, the fact

is unquestionable that he was the victim, rather of party hatred and political expediency, than of his own misconduct. The Whigs, in this country, have generally owed their power to agitation, and it was in the spirit of this principle that, on the accession of George the First to the throne, they were willing that the Tories should commit themselves by making some rash attempt in favour of the Pretender, in order that, by the suppression of some popular outbreak (the importance of which they would probably have greatly exaggerated), they might win the confidence and ensure the gratitude of the new king. Failing in this object, the next alternative of the Whigs was to prejudice the king by every possible means against the Tory party, and to exhibit their zeal by an open persecution of their enemies.

The chairman of the secret committee, which had been appointed to collect charges against Bolingbroke, was Robert Walpole, afterward the celebrated Whig minister, who, having formerly been expelled the House of Commons, principally at the instigation of the proscribed statesman, was well qualified, from the personal dislike which he entertained toward his political opponent, to act with all desirable severity and vindictiveness. Accordingly, on the 2d June, 1715, Walpole presented the report of the committee to the House of Commons. Owing to the zeal of the committee, or rather to their fixed resolution to search

out the slightest incident which might reflect on the conduct of Bolingbroke, the report had consumed two months in drawing up, and now occupied as many as six hours in reading. The charges, on which the impeachment was founded, consisted of six articles, and were as follow: "That whereas the Lord Bolingbroke had assured the Dutch ministers that the queen, his mistress, would make no peace but in concert with them, yet he had sent Mr. Prior to France that same year, with proposals for a treaty of peace with that monarch, without the consent of the allies; that he advised and promoted the making a separate treaty of convention with France, which was signed in September; that he disclosed to M. Mesnager, the French minister at London, this convention, which was the preliminary instruction to her Majesty's plenipotentiaries at Utrecht; that her Majesty's final instructions to her plenipotentiaries were disclosed by him to the Abbot Gaultier, who was an emissary from France; that he disclosed to the French the manner how Tournay, in Flanders, might be gained by them; and, lastly, that he advised and promoted the yielding up Spain and the West Indies to the Duke of Anjou, then an enemy to her Majesty."

After the report had been read a second time, Walpole stood up in the House of Commons, and formally impeached Henry, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, of high treason and other high crimes and

misdemeanours. He then burst out into an overwhelming tirade of eloquence and bitterness, in which he drew the character of his political opponent as that of a corrupt minister and unprincipled traitor, and magnified his misdemeanour with all the power of genius, and all the acrimony of inveterate hatred. This celebrated speech was succeeded by a silence which lasted several minutes. To the disgrace of human nature, two voices only were raised in behalf of that great genius, whose transcendent eloquence had, but a few weeks before, excited the spontaneous acclamations of that same assembly, — consisting of the very same members, — and who had recently driven his present accuser from its walls by a display of oratory more brilliant than his own.

But two persons, it has been remarked, stood up in favour of Bolingbroke, and their defence was as useless to the exile as it was honourable to themselves. The first speaker was a Mr. Hungerford, who, without attempting the advocacy of Bolingbroke's principles or conduct, confined himself to the plain fact that there was nothing in the charges which had hitherto been adduced, that by any possibility could be construed into the crime of high treason. He was followed by General Ross, a personal friend of Bolingbroke. When he stood up the eyes of the whole House were fixed upon him, and this circumstance, added to the novelty of the situation in which

he was placed, is said to have wholly deprived him of the power of utterance. Remaining in this embarrassed position for some time, he at length muttered a few words, expressing his wonder that no one better qualified should be found to advocate the cause of his friend, and adding that he would reserve what he had to say for a better opportunity. The emotion exhibited by the old soldier, and his speechless, though expressive, appeal in favour of an absent friend, are said to have had an effect on the House which could scarcely have been produced by a torrent of eloquence; and when he sat down, it was amidst the spontaneous cheers of the united assembly. "It is strange," he said to a person near him, "that I cannot speak for him, when I would so willingly fight for him."

The charges preferred against Bolingbroke in the House of Commons are so entirely in the spirit of party, that, to have induced them to arrive at their prejudiced decisions, it must have required the grossest servility from one portion of the House, and the most furious enmity on the part of the other. That Bolingbroke, during the complicated and most difficult negotiations connected with the Treaty of Utrecht, and with the variety of interests which he had to consult, may not, in every individual point, have carried out his instructions in their exact spirit; that he adopted measures which the emergency of

the occasion could alone justify; and, moreover, that, in particular points, there were grounds for accusing him of not having properly supported the interests of England, or kept strict faith with her allies, are facts which it would be difficult to disprove. On the other hand, there is not the slightest ground for accusing him of intentional dishonesty, and even had all the charges brought against him been distinctly proved, they could not legally have amounted to high treason.

Moreover, admitting that offences had been committed against the state, it was not Bolingbroke individually who was to blame, but the Tory party in general, and the House of Commons who had solemnly and distinctly approved the proceedings. When Sir William Wyndham subsequently reminded the House that the late peace had been sanctioned by two successive Parliaments, and had been declared by them to be a safe, advantageous, and honourable one, he answered every argument that could be adduced against Bolingbroke's conduct. "Though a subsequent Parliament," added Wyndham, "may annul any laws which a former Parliament has decreed, yet it cannot and ought not to call any ministers to justice, for measures which have been sanctioned by the three branches of the legislature." These arguments, however, had little weight with the House of Commons. They passed a bill, summoning Bolingbroke to appear

before their tribunal on a certain day, and, in default, attainted him of high treason. Their summons being, of course, disregarded, he was formally declared to be degraded from his nobility, to be attainted in blood, and disqualified from inheriting the estates of his family, and, finally, he was condemned to suffer death on the scaffold should he ever again set foot in his native country. Notwithstanding a strong protest, the bill which awarded these severe penalties passed the House of Lords, and eventually received the royal assent.

There was one crime laid to the account of Bolingbroke, which was, of course, regarded by his Whig persecutors as the blackest in the catalogue of his political offences; we allude to the charge, which has been so often and so confidently brought against him, of having entertained an intention of restoring the Stuart dynasty, and, with this purpose, of having invited the Pretender to return to England on the death of Queen Anne. We have certainly no desire to enter into the merits of a difficult controversy, which has been often and ably discussed. It is necessary, however, to observe that, as this charge is omitted in the articles of impeachment, his enemies must have failed in procuring evidence to substantiate it. One or two vague conjectures, indeed, and an ingenious interpretation of some questionable documents, constitute the unsatisfactory and sole presumption of his guilt. Had

he ever in reality made any treasonable overtures to the exiled family, the proofs could scarcely have escaped the vindictive industry of Walpole and the rigorous investigation of the secret committee. But even had they chanced to have eluded so searching an inquisition, we who live in later times must have discovered the missing evidence, either from the "Stuart Papers," or from other literary emporiums to which posterity has had access.

If the fortunes of Bolingbroke were on the decline in England, his position in France was as little to be envied. Nothing, indeed, could be more lamentable, or adapted more strikingly to illustrate the instability of human greatness, than the situation to which the once powerful Bolingbroke was now reduced. Deserted by his friends and flatterers, and stripped of his rank, fortune, and political power, he found himself an almost impoverished exile in that very country where, but a few months before, he had been caressed by the king, followed by the acclamations of thousands in whatever town he passed through, and universally courted by the nobles, equally for his wit and celebrity as a man of genius, as from his being the minister of the most powerful kingdom in the world.

Added to the misery of self-reflection, the misfortunes of exile, and the inconveniences of a very restricted income, Bolingbroke, about this period, was laid prostrate on a bed of sickness on the

banks of the Rhone. It was in this unhappy condition that he received a visit from an emissary of the Pretender, who was then residing, with his small court, at Barr. The arguments of this unexpected visitor, or rather the exaggerated picture which he drew of the prosperous condition of his master's affairs, would probably have had but little weight with such a mind as Bolingbroke's had he not been predisposed to listen to the persuasions of the tempter, from the feelings of resentment which rankled in his mind. The personal character of the Pretender he ever affected to despise; but, as he himself tells us, "the smart of a bill of attainder tingled in every vein." His decision was soon made. He hastened to the heir of the Stuarts, who had now removed to Commercy, and, with a heart panting for revenge and retribution, accepted the seals under that unhappy prince.

The step adopted by Bolingbroke on this occasion must not only be regarded as a blot on his character, but reflects very disparagingly on his common sense. This was the view which was afterward entertained by Bolingbroke himself of his own conduct. His heart seems to have failed him in the first act of the drama, and he admits that the first conversation which he held with his new master convinced him of the unworthiness of the man whose cause he had adopted, and how desperate was the undertaking in which he had so rashly embarked. Speaking of their first inter-

view, he says: "He talked to me like a man who expected every moment to set out for England or Scotland, but who did not very well know for which; and when he entered into the particulars of his affairs, I found that, concerning the former, he had nothing more circumstantial nor positive to go upon than what I had already heard." Bolingbroke further informs us that, when he accepted the seals from the exiled prince, feeling himself both averse to and unfit for the service, he extorted a promise from his new master that, at the termination of their present engagement, he should be free to return to a private condition, whether the result should be success or defeat.

On his arrival in France, Bolingbroke had made a solemn promise to the English ambassador, the Earl of Stair, that he would enter into no engagements with the exiled prince; the fact, therefore, of his breaking that promise must ever be regarded as a stain upon his memory. It has been advanced, indeed, in justification of his conduct, that the pledge was given voluntarily, and with the view of serving his friends in England. Morality, however, must be at a low ebb, when falsehood, under any circumstances, shall be deemed exempt from reprehension. The apologies offered for Bolingbroke form but a frail defence against the arguments of his enemies; and among the subsequent regrets with which he could not fail to review his past conduct, the recollection of his having broken

a solemn contract was, probably, not the least bitter.

The history of the fatal and ill-judged rebellion of 1715, and the downfall of the hopes of the Stuarts, requires neither recapitulation nor comment. If any one could have retrieved the affairs of the Pretender, or materially assisted in reinstating him on the throne of his ancestors, that one would have been Bolingbroke. But so little caution had been exercised, and so many individuals had been entrusted with the secrets of the exiled court, that Bolingbroke had the mortification to find all his intrigues counteracted by the blunders or treachery of his own party, and to learn that the English ministers were as intimately acquainted with their proceedings as were the Jacobites themselves.

On the return of the Pretender from his rash expedition to Scotland, all the weight of his resentment fell on Bolingbroke. Probably he really suspected the fidelity of his new secretary, for otherwise, by his unaccountable conduct, he ran the risk of being charged with the grossest ingratitude, without any adequate advantage resulting to his own cause. Bolingbroke, it seems, had an interview with him at St. Germains, on which occasion they met and parted with every appearance of cordiality. "No Italian," says Bolingbroke, "ever embraced the man he was going to stab with greater show of affection and confidence." On taking leave of the prince, the latter inquired

of Bolingbroke how long it would be before he followed him, and, at the same time, gave him some trifling commissions to execute in his absence.

The next morning Bolingbroke received a visit from the Duke of Ormond, who presented him with a slip of paper, in the Pretender's own handwriting, intimating that he had no longer any occasion for his services, and directing him to give up the papers in the secretary's office. These papers, according to Bolingbroke, might have been contained in a letter-case of a moderate size. It has been remarked, as a singular circumstance, that within the short space of twelve months, Bolingbroke should have held the appointment of secretary of state both to Queen Anne and the Pretender, and that in each case his dismissal from office should have been followed by an attainder.

The manner in which Bolingbroke was treated by his new master, was certainly as little deserved as had been his previous impeachment in England. Many stories are related as to the true cause of his dismissal, but as the majority of them are improbable, and several of them absurd, — and, moreover, as Bolingbroke himself never thought them worthy of refutation, — it is scarcely necessary to do more than refer to them. The only charge which Bolingbroke himself condescended to answer, was an accusation of intentional dilatoriness in sending gunpowder to Scotland. Even this charge he could only be induced to reply to

through his secretary, and in the following haughty and characteristic manner:

"The Earl of Mar and the others who came from Scotland are so much in want of an excuse for their flight, that they have thought fit to have my Lord Bolingbroke discharged the chevalier's service in the most abrupt and injurious manner, under the pretence that the want of powder, which he delayed to send, forced them to abandon Scotland.

"His lordship says publicly, first, that he is able to prove that if they wanted powder, it was not by his fault.

"Secondly, — That according to what the chevalier and the Earl of Mar both say in their letters, they must have come away as they did, had they had all the powder in France.

"Thirdly, — That if they had pleased to have stayed in Scotland a few days longer, they would have received near ten thousand arms, and near thirty thousand weight of powder, and other stores in proportion.

"And, lastly, that the true reason flows from another source; and that he knew and spoke of the design to discard him long before the want of powder was so much as talked of. That he is unwilling to enter into particulars of those general heads, for reasons that may be easily guessed, since he is persuaded that he shall neither pass for a traitor nor a driveller among his friends."

There is extant a curious letter, dated the 3d March, 1716, from the Earl of Stair, the English ambassador at Paris, to the elder Horace Walpole, in which the gossip of the French capital, on the subject of Bolingbroke's dismissal, is thus referred to: "The true Jacobite project has been at last discovered, and they imagined nobody would tell it but Bolingbroke, who they have, as they now say, clearly discovered has all along betrayed them, and so poor Harry is turned out from being secretary of state, and the seals are given to Mar; and they use poor Harry most unmercifully, and call him knave and traitor, and God knows what. I believe all poor Harry's fault was that he could not play his part with a grave enough face; he could not help laughing, now and then, at such kings and queens. He had a mistress here at Paris, and got drunk now and then, and he spent the money upon his mistress that he should have bought powder with, and neglected buying and sending the powder and the arms, and never went near the queen, and, in one word, told Lord Stair all their designs, and was had out of England for that purpose. I would not have you laugh, Mr. Walpole, for all this is very serious. For the rest, they begin now to apprehend that their king is unlucky, and that the westerly winds and Bolingbroke's treason have defeated the finest project that ever was laid."

One circumstance, which is more than hinted

at by Lord Stair, is not at all improbable, that Bolingbroke's love of the ridiculous carried him beyond all bounds, and that in moments of social hilarity, he indulged in ludicrous comments on his own pretensions and those of his master.

After all, Bolingbroke appears to have been influenced in a less degree by interested considerations than any other minister at the Pretender's court, and a manifest proof of this assertion is the fact that, while others were draining the ill-supplied coffers of the little court of St. Germains for their own use, he himself exhausted in his master's service the greater part of the money which he had saved from the wreck of his fortunes.

The evidence of the celebrated Duke of Berwick — a man who was as little likely to be prejudiced in favour of Bolingbroke as he was capable of telling an untruth — is alone sufficient to establish the innocence of the disgraced secretary. The duke, after speaking of the dismissal of Bolingbroke, by his half-brother, the Pretender, as "an enormous blunder," proceeds: "I was in part a witness how he acted for King James, whilst he managed his affairs, and I owe him the justice to say that he left nothing undone of what he could do. He moved heaven and earth to obtain supplies, but was always put off by the court of France, and though he saw through their pretexts and complained to them, yet there was no other power to which he could apply."

After quitting the service of the Pretender, Bolingbroke passed a few months in the French capital, where his literary reputation and conversational powers procured for him the friendship and admiration of the French *savans*, at a period when an illustrious assemblage of talent rendered the close of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth the Augustan era of France.

Notwithstanding his accumulated misfortunes, Bolingbroke continued to maintain his reputation of being a man of gallantry, and to mingle the pursuit of pleasure with graver avocations and tastes. He formed a connection with the beautiful Madame Tencin, so celebrated for her love of gallantry and her taste for political intrigues; and, subsequently, maintained as his acknowledged mistress a young girl who had made her escape from a convent. From the memoirs of Elizabeth Charlotte, Duchess of Orleans, we learn that his intrigue with this unfortunate female afforded considerable amusement to the fashionable circles of Paris, and that the following verses on the subject were much in vogue at that period:

"Bolingbroke, es-tu possédé?
Quel est ton désir chimérique,
De t'amuser à chevaucher
La fille de Saint-Dominique?
Crois-tu que d'elle et d'un Torris
Il en puisse naître l'anti-christ?
Penses-tu donc plaire au régent,

En suivant toujours cette guenipe?
Il l'a ratée, il y a trois ans,
Il a juré par Saint-Philippe,
Qu'il méprisera tout mortel
Sacrifiant à cet autel."

According to the duchess, it was believed by many persons that the young girl, notwithstanding her frailty, continued a *religieuse* at heart. "But," adds the duchess, "she had long run after my own son, without, however, being successful in the pursuit." Bolingbroke formed, about the same time, an acquaintance with a beautiful and accomplished woman, who, on the death of Lady Bolingbroke, two years afterward, became his second wife. This lady was Mary Clara Des Champs de Marsilly, widow of the Marquis de Villette, and a niece of Madame de Maintenon. Madame de Villette was surrounded by a host of admirers, and as it was not in Bolingbroke's power to make her his wife, the circumstance that she was free to confer her hand upon another seems to have occasioned him inexpressible pain.

Among his rivals was a handsome Scotch adventurer of the name of M'Donald, who held a high appointment in the service of the Pretender. We mention this person, because the jealousy with which Bolingbroke regarded his attentions to Madame de Villette hurried him, at least on one occasion, to very indecorous lengths. One day, indeed, at the table of the marchioness,

he attempted to inflict personal chastisement on his rival. On the occasion referred to, he rose from his seat in a moment of ungovernable passion, and, in making his way toward the offender, upset the table at which the company were seated, and fell prostrate among the broken dishes. One of the guests, the Marquis de Matignon, for the time, assuaged his angry feelings; but his jealousy is said to have afterward frequently broken out at any attention paid by his rival to the object of their mutual regard.

The death of Lady Bolingbroke occurred in November, 1718, and in May, 1720, Bolingbroke was privately married to the Marchioness de Villette. It was a step which he never had occasion to repent. By her lively manners, her affectionate disposition, and forbearing temper, the marchioness rendered herself necessary to his happiness, and, probably, appeared the more charming from the fact of his first wife having been an object of indifference and even of dislike. She entered into his literary tastes, was a sharer of his political prejudices, was indulgent to his errors, and appreciated, and was proud of his genius. Moreover, she was possessed of a considerable fortune, which in the present state of Bolingbroke's finances and with his expensive tastes and habits, was a circumstance of the first importance to him. Intent on accommodating herself to all her husband's necessities, she was even complaisant

enough to profess herself of the reformed religion. This also was an important object to Bolingbroke, for had it been known in England that he had united himself to a Roman Catholic, the circumstance would, unquestionably, have been fatal to his hopes of obtaining a pardon.

Shortly before his marriage, Bolingbroke had purchased a small estate, called La Source, near Orleans, where henceforward he resided till the period of his recall. The spot was a beautiful one; the taste which he displayed in its adornment is said to have been exquisite, and his hospitality unbounded. In a letter to Swift, he styles it his "hermitage," and speaking of the small river Loiret, which took its source close to his chateau, he says, "I have in my wood the biggest and clearest spring in Europe, which forms, before it leaves the park, a more beautiful river than any which flows in Greek or Latin verse." It was one of his fancies, at this period, to adorn his house and grounds with such inscriptions as either had reference to the circumstances of his exile, or to the equanimity with which he professed to endure his misfortunes. One inscription, in particular, — which he placed over the portico of his house, — is worthy of being recorded. If it really spoke the sentiments of his mind, it would have been creditable to the principles of a Stoic philosopher.[1]

[1] The inscription here alluded to is as follows: "Si resipiscat patria, in patriam rediturus. Si non resipiscat, ubivis melius

The retreat of Bolingbroke at La Source was frequently resorted to by the first men of genius from the French capital. Among those who enjoyed the hospitality of the exile was Voltaire, then a young man, who, to the close of his long life, spoke enthusiastically of the enchanting visits which he paid to "*Milord Bolingbroke et Madame de Villette.*" Referring to the former, he says, in a letter to Teriot: "*J'ai trouvé dans cet illustre Anglais tout l'érudition de son pays et toute la politesse du nôtre.*" Bolingbroke, it may be remarked, is said to have given some of the last touches to the "Henriade," which Voltaire had just finished.

quam inter tales cives futurus: hanc villam instauro et exorno: hinc, velut ex portu, alienos casus et fortunæ ludum insolentem cernere suave est. Hîc, mortem nec appetens nec timens, innocuis deliciis, doctâ quiete et felicis animi immotâ tranquilitate, fruiscor. Hîc mihi vivam quod super est aut exilii aut ævi."

CHAPTER XIV.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

St. John Obtains a Pardon in 1723 — Bribes the Duchess of Kendal — His Attainder Still in Force — His Return to England — Again Interferes in Political Intrigues — Walpole's Hatred of Him — Restored to His Family Inheritance through the Influence of the Duchess of Kendal — Walpole Reluctantly Supports the Bill in the Commons — St. John's Memorial Respecting the Incapacity of Walpole Privately Presented to the King by the Duchess of Kendal — The King Shows It to Walpole — St. John's Interview with the King — St. John's Sanguine Hopes of Supplanting Walpole — Death of the King Fatal to His Hopes — He Retires to Dawley — His Affected Love of Retirement — Lord Chesterfield's Opinion of Him — St. John's Contributions to "The Craftsman" — Fall of Walpole — St. John Pays Court to the Prince of Wales — Interesting Anecdote — St. John's Hospitality at Dawley — Retires to France — His Letters to Sir W. Wyndham — His Occupations during His Retirement — Returns to England, and Resides with Pope at Twickenham — Pope's Account of St. John's Mode of Life in France — St. John Finally Takes up His Abode at Battersea — Lord Chesterfield's Sketch of Him in Old Age — Declining Health of St. John's Wife — Her Death in 1750 — St. John Attacked by a Cancerous Humour in the Face — Sufferings Occasioned by It — His Death in 1751 — His Character by Lord Orrery — Swift's and Pitt's Opinions of His Oratory — His Character as a Philosophical Writer — Mallet's Edition of His Works, and Garrick's Epigram on It.

AT length, in 1723, after an exile of about nine years, Bolingbroke (by means of a bribe of

£11,000, which was offered to, and accepted by, the Duchess of Kendal, the German mistress of George the First) obtained a virtual pardon of his political offences. It amounted, however, to little more than a bare permission to return to his native country. The attainder remained in force; his title was still withheld from him; he was rendered incapable of inheriting the family estates, and was precluded alike from resuming his seat in the House of Lords, and from filling any situation under the state.

Bolingbroke's pardon, however, was no sooner known to have passed the great seal, than he departed on his journey toward England. Voltaire writes to a friend: "*Une chose qui m'intéresse davantage c'est le rappel de Milord Bolingbroke en Angleterre. Il sera aujourd'hui à Paris, et j'aurai la douleur de lui dire adieu peut-être pour toujours.*" Nearly at the same time that Bolingbroke received his pardon, it is remarkable that Bishop Atterbury was sentenced to banishment by his peers. It is even said that, at the moment when the bishop set his foot on the pier of Calais, Bolingbroke was on the point of sailing for England. It was a singular coincidence, and escaped not the observation of Atterbury. "Ah," he said, "it is clear that we are exchanged." Pope writes to Swift at this period: "Lord Bolingbroke is now returned, as I hope, to take me, with all his other hereditary rights. It is my ill fate that all those

whom I most loved, and with whom I most lived, must be banished. After both of you left England, my constant host was the Bishop of Rochester. Sure, this is a nation which is cursedly afraid of being overrun with too much politeness; and we cannot regain one great genius but at the expense of another."

Bolingbroke had no sooner set his foot in his native land, than, forgetting those philosophical principles which he had so recently professed on the banks of the Loiret, and amidst the shady groves of La Source, he was drawn once more into the vortex of politics, and again contrived to lose himself in a labyrinth of intrigues. Walpole, his former schoolfellow and political antagonist, was, at this period, at the head of the English ministry; and to procure the fall of that celebrated man, all the energies of Bolingbroke's mind were called into play. Probably, in the whole history of political warfare, no two statesmen ever personally regarded each other with a more invincible dislike. When the attainder of Bolingbroke was once referred to in the House of Commons, the mere mention of the name of his detested rival effectually destroyed the equanimity of the good-natured minister. After uttering a volume of invectives against Bolingbroke and his principles, "May his attainder," he added, indignantly, "never be reversed, and may his crimes never be forgotten!"

It has been asserted by Horace Walpole that Bolingbroke was entirely indebted for his recall to Sir Robert. The fact, however, is beyond a question that the minister retarded in every possible manner the pardon of his adversary. Walpole, indeed, openly opposed the claims of Bolingbroke both at the council board and in Parliament; and it was owing to his personal influence and unwearying exertions that the boon obtained for Bolingbroke by the Duchess of Kendal was confined to a mere permission to live unmolested in England. We have been induced to mention these circumstances, because, if Bolingbroke had really been indebted for his pardon to Walpole, his subsequent inveterate opposition to the government of that minister must be regarded in no other light than as an act of the most flagrant ingratitude.

After his return to England, Bolingbroke and the minister met, at least, on one occasion. Walpole even invited him to dinner, and Bolingbroke accepted the invitation. "Bolingbroke," says Horace Walpole, "could not avoid waiting on Sir Robert to thank him, and was invited to dine with him at Chelsea. But, whether tortured at witnessing Walpole's serene frankness, or suffocated with indignation and confusion at being forced to be obliged to one whom he hated and envied, the first morsel he put into his mouth was near choking him, and he was reduced to rise from table and

leave the room for some minutes. I never heard of their meeting more."

Irritated at the constant refusals returned to his applications for a reversal of his attainder, panting once more to enjoy the advantages of political influence and distinction, and stimulated by personal feelings of rivalship and dislike, Bolingbroke set his whole soul at work to destroy the influence of Walpole with the king. As yet the only boon that he had obtained since his return to England was the passing of an Act of Parliament in 1725, which restored him to his family inheritance, and enabled him to make purchases of any real or personal estate within the kingdom. The bill in question was supported by Sir Robert Walpole in the House of Commons, but the minister has himself informed us that it was entirely against his own inclination that the measure was introduced into Parliament, and that nothing but the express commands of his sovereign would have induced him to give it his sanction or support.

On this occasion, as on a former one, Bolingbroke was indebted to the good offices of the Duchess of Kendal. The imperial courtesan, indeed, appears to have conceived a personal dislike to Walpole, and, either influenced by this feeling, or grateful for the magnificent bribe which she had received at the hands of his enemy, she lost no opportunity of advancing the interests of the latter. She even privately presented to the king

a memorial, drawn up by Bolingbroke, in which he insisted on the incapacity of the minister, attributing to him all the presumed misfortunes with which the country was afflicted, and concluding by demanding a personal interview. This interview the king thought proper to grant, though, at the same time, he showed his confidence in Walpole by handing to him the offensive memorial.

Whatever may have occurred at the singular meeting between George the First and Bolingbroke, so little does the king appear to have been affected by the polished address and insinuating eloquence of the wily statesman that, when afterward interrogated as to the substance of their conversation, he indifferently replied, "Bagatelles, bagatelles!" During the whole time, indeed, that Bolingbroke was closeted with the king, Walpole, it is said, was waiting, quietly and unconcernedly, in the antechamber till the interview should be at an end.

It is to be regretted that the memorial presented by Bolingbroke to George the First should no longer be in existence. A short time before the death of Sir Robert Walpole, he observed to his son: "Horace, when I am gone, you will find many curious papers in the drawer of this table." Among these papers was the memorial in question; but after the death of the minister it was, unfortunately, nowhere to be found. It was believed by Horace Walpole, either that his elder brother had inadvertently destroyed it, or that it

had been abstracted by a steward who was either a virtuoso or a thief.

It has generally been presumed that, in the later struggles which took place between Bolingbroke and Walpole, the former had never in reality the remotest chance of expelling his rival, or of installing himself in his room. Etough, in detailing the minutes of a curious conversation which he held with Sir Robert Walpole, observes: "September 13, 1737, I had an opportunity for full conversation with Sir Robert Walpole. I mentioned then to him Bolingbroke's reports of his often attending the late king at supper, and of his interest being so prevailing that it was with the utmost importunity and address he persuaded the king to defer the making him prime minister, till he returned from Hanover. He condescended to give me this explanation. He said lying was so natural to St. John that it was impossible for him to keep within the bounds of truth. He might truly boast of his prospects, for they were very great; though things were not so fixed and near as he pretended. He had the entire interest of the Duchess of Kendal, and having this, what consequences time would probably have produced required no explanation. St. John, he averred, had only been once with the king, which was owing to his importunity."

On this occasion, Etough contents himself with merely repeating the minutes of his conversation

with Sir Robert Walpole, but on the other hand, in an unpublished letter to Doctor Birch, we find him expressing himself fully satisfied of the probability of St. John's ultimate success. "Bolingbroke," he writes, "would have prevailed had the king lived. What fully amounts to this I am sure I had from the late Earl of Oxford. Mr. H. Walpole has warmly rebuked me for this report, but offered nothing solid in the way of contradiction." The subject, indeed, is more than once adverted to by Horace Walpole in his letters, but so absorbing was his attachment to his father, and so great was his admiration of his talents, that he could be induced to regard it in no other light than as a fantastical chimera.

That Bolingbroke, indeed, trod closely in the steps of his enemy, and that his success at one period was extremely probable, we cannot for a moment question. In the year 1727, he was openly spoken of as the future minister; the adversaries of Walpole rallied confidently around him, and Bolingbroke himself insisted that, immediately after the king's return from Hanover, the world would see him first minister. To quote Sir Robert Walpole's own words: "As St. John had the duchess entirely on his side, I need not add what must, or might, in time, have been the consequence." Swift, in one of his letters to Doctor Sheridan, expresses his belief that Bolingbroke's triumph was at hand; Atterbury, also, in a me-

morial addressed to Cardinal Fleury, treats the downfall of Sir Robert as certain; and, moreover, Henry Pelham assured Speaker Onslow that, so convinced was Walpole himself of Bolingbroke's approaching triumph, that it was only owing to the earnest remonstrances of the Duke of Devonshire and the Princess of Wales, that he was prevented from tendering his resignation, and accepting a peerage.

The decease of George the First, however, and the entire confidence extended to Walpole by the new monarch, were fatal to the expectations and ambitious projects of Bolingbroke. He, accordingly, retired to a seat which he had purchased at Dawley, near Uxbridge, where, affecting the utmost contempt for politics and party, he endeavoured to cheat himself into a belief that he was a very contented philosopher, and that the world and its vanities were beneath his interest or regard.

With Bolingbroke, however, ambition constituted the vital principle of existence, and it was only on occasions when the star of his genius was obscured in the political horizon that he fell back into the regions of philosophy, and, affecting to be wholly absorbed in the cultivation of letters and the quiet enjoyments of a country life, spoke of retirement as the only source of happiness and the panacea for all human ills. Not that, in his professions of philosophical indifference, and in the glowing pictures which he draws of his classical

seclusion, we can accuse him of a strained attempt at dramatic effect, for we find him expatiating on these subjects, not merely in those finished essays which were intended to win the applause of the public, but also in his confidential letters to his most intimate friends. It could only, however, have been in the seclusion of his own closet, in particular moments of self-approbation, or when thwarted in his ambitious views, that he flattered himself he was superior to the common weaknesses of mankind, and that the honours and rewards to be gained by a communion with his fellows were beneath the notice of a philosopher and a man of letters. But, no sooner did the moment for action present itself, no sooner did there appear a prospect of success, than, like the soldier who rouses himself at the familiar sound of the trumpet, he rushed at once into the heart of the contest, and again sought to become a participator in the spoils.

Unquestionably, the actions of Bolingbroke, on more than one occasion, gave the lie to his professions. Lord Chesterfield, who was well acquainted with him, once observed in conversation with a friend: "Though nobody spoke and wrote better on philosophy than Lord Bolingbroke, no man in the world had less share of philosophy than himself; that the least trifle, such as the over-roasting of a leg of mutton, would strangely disturb and ruffle his temper, and

that his passions constantly got the better of his judgment." Bolingbroke had already boasted of his philosophy amidst the beautiful solitudes of La Source, but no sooner was it permitted him to return to the scene of his former contests and early splendour, than the scabbard was thrown away in the struggle for distinction, and his philosophy forgotten in the excitement of the fray.

Bolingbroke's political writings at this period, more especially his contributions to the "Craftsman," will ever be read for the closeness of their argument and the bitterness of their invective. Probably it afforded no slight degree of consolation to his wounded spirit that, though unable to build his own fortunes on the ruins of his rival's power, yet that his writings gradually undermined and destroyed the popularity of Walpole, and had the principal share in effecting the downfall of his enemy.

At Dawley, Bolingbroke received frequent visits from Pope, Swift, Gay, and other celebrated men, whose genius and writings constituted the Augustan age of England. The wit, the kindness, and the hospitality of Bolingbroke, as well as the charms of his retreat, are constantly referred to in their letters, and, among other encomiums, those of Pope are not the least pleasing. In one of his letters to Swift he says: "I now hold the pen for my Lord Bolingbroke, who is reading your letter between two haycocks; but his atten-

tion is somewhat diverted by casting his eyes on the clouds, not in admiration of what you say, but for fear of a shower. As to the return of his health and vigour, were you here, you might inquire of his haymakers, but as to his temperance, I can answer that for one whole day we have had nothing for dinner but mutton broth, beans and bacon, and a barn-door fowl. Now his lordship has run after his cart, I have a moment left to myself to tell you that I overheard him yesterday agree with a painter for two hundred pounds to paint his country-hall with rakes, spades, prongs, and other ornaments, merely to countenance his calling this place a farm."

Bolingbroke, indeed, did his best to persuade his friends and himself that he was completely wedded to the quiet pleasures of a country life, and that he had cheerfully bidden adieu to that stormy element on which he had once delighted to ride. In one of his letters to Swift, speaking of his favourite "farm," he says: "I have caught hold of the earth (to use a gardener's phrase), and neither my enemies nor my friends will find it an easy matter to transplant me again." Again, over the entrance of his farm was inscribed, in prominent letters:

"SATIS BEATUS RURIS HONORIBUS."

Notwithstanding, however, his vaunted indifference to what was passing in the world, it was

professedly owing to the disgust which he conceived at the conduct of his political friends that, in January, 1735, he retired to France, with the intention of never returning to his native country. The large majority which Walpole still commanded in the House of Commons, and the repeated refusals of the government to restore him to his seat in the House of Lords, continued to be sources of constant irritation and complaint. Among other and frequent outbreaks of his uneasy spirit, a letter addressed by him at this period to Sir William Wyndham displays little of the indifference of a Stoic. "I am still," he says, "the same proscribed man, surrounded with difficulties, exposed to mortifications, and unable to take any share in the service, but that which I have taken hitherto, and which, I think, you would not persuade me to take in the present state of things. My part is over, and he who remains on the stage after his part is over deserves to be hissed off."

The spot fixed upon by Bolingbroke as his new retreat was a place called Chantelon, near Fontainebleau. Neither his health nor his spirits, however, appear to have benefited by the change. To Sir William Wyndham he writes, at the beginning of the following year: "I have no gout, but I have frequently interruptions of sleep, and great depressions of spirits. I relieve myself, when they first happen, by yielding to them; at whatever hour they take me, I rise, and read or write or

walk about. I give full employment to this fluttering activity of the spirits. When I cannot have sleep as I would, I take it as I can; and, like my brother animals, I recover by snatches in the day what I lost in the night. They say this method is unwholesome. But if it shortens life in one sense, it prolongs life in another, and a better. We lose time enough in sleep, but to lose any in endeavouring to sleep is unnecessary profusion. As to the other evil you complained of, lassitude and depression of spirits, temperance, and even abstinence, is the proper remedy, for our spirits flag by repletion." On his screen, at his house at Chantelon, he is said to have inscribed the following verse:

"Las d'espérer, et de me plaindre
Des Muses, des grands, et du sort,
J'attens ici la mort,
Sans la désirer ou la craindre."

The copy of this inscription was found among the manuscripts of the late George Selwyn, with the following amusing paraphrase by Horace Walpole:

"Weary of hoping and complaining,
Of things that reign, or should be reigning;
Without a wish, without a tear,
And, — as I'm safe, — without a fear."

The time passed by Bolingbroke at Chantelon appears to have been divided between literary

composition and the pleasures of the field. Like Gibbon, he usually wrote in a small pavilion which he had constructed in his garden,[1] and here he composed his "Letters on the Study of History," his celebrated "Essay on the Use of Retirement and Study," and other works. Pulteney describes him, at this period, as living at a great expense, and expresses his conviction that he can only look to the death of his father for the means of continuing his profusion. Pulteney adds that, though Lord St. John must be on the verge of ninety, he was far more likely to marry than to die.

Bolingbroke had never been a very prudent manager of his fortune, and it seems to have been owing to the embarrassed state of his affairs that, after a residence of about four years at Chantelon, he was compelled to pay a visit to England. His object was to dispose of his farm at Dawley, which he eventually sold for twenty-six thousand pounds. During the six months that he remained in England, he principally resided with Pope, at Twickenham, enjoying the society of Marchmont, Wyndham, and other friends. Probably it was at this time that Pope composed those beautiful lines "On his grotto at Twickenham," which have conferred an undying interest on his favourite cave:

[1] The celebrated Buffon, with a similarity of taste, composed in an old tower in his garden.

"Approach, but awful! lo! the Ægerian grot,
Where, nobly pensive, St. John sat and thought;
Where British sighs from dying Wyndham stole,
And the bright flame was shot through Marchmont's soul.
Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor,
Who dare to love their country, and be poor."

Again, the poet exclaims, in one of his imitations of Horace:

"There, my retreat the best companions grace,
Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place.
There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl,
The feast of reason and the flow of soul."

In one of his letters to Swift, Pope (who probably received the following account from Bolingbroke's own lips) gives an interesting description of the philosopher's mode of living in France. "Lord Bolingbroke's plan of life is now a very agreeable one; in the finest country of France, divided between study and exercise, for he still reads or writes five or six hours a day, and hunts generally twice a week. He has the whole forest of Fontainebleau at his command, with the king's stables and dogs. His lady's son-in-law being governor of that place, she resides most part of the year with my lord at a large house they have hired, and the rest with her daughter, who is abbess of a royal convent in the neighbourhood. I never saw him in stronger health or in better humour

with his friends, or more indifferent or dispassionate as to his enemies." Among the letters from Bolingbroke to Wyndham, preserved with the Egremont papers at Petworth, the greater number are said to contain directions for sending him out pointers to Fontainebleau, and to be principally occupied with allusions to the sports of the field. Bolingbroke had never been indifferent to the pleasures of the country. Swift, in recording a visit which he paid him in 1711, observes: "Mr. Secretary was a perfect country gentleman at Bucklebury: he smoked tobacco with one or two neighbours; he inquired after the wheat in such a field; he went to visit his hounds, and knew all their names. He and his lady saw me to my chamber just in the country fashion."

From the period that Walpole was driven from power, Bolingbroke ceased to distinguish himself as a party writer, and thus, after a contention of nearly half a century, terminated the great struggle between these celebrated men. Though Bolingbroke no longer bore a prominent part in the politics of the day, his ambitious spirit was certainly far from being at rest, and, even at the age of seventy we find him entertaining a scheme of future greatness, by courting the favour of Frederick, Prince of Wales. "The court he paid the prince," says Horace Walpole, "was to a degree of adoration. One day that he dined with Lord Egmont, the prince came in as they were

drinking coffee, and bade them not mind him. Lord Egmont, who knew that to obey was respect, gave Lord Bolingbroke a dish; but he, who thought that to disobey from respect was more respectful (and who, perhaps, knew that, though the prince seemed to encourage familiarity, he never forgave it), started up and cried: 'Good God! my lord, what are you doing? Do you consider who is present?'" The first interview between the prince and Lord Bolingbroke had been a secret one. Lord Bolingbroke happened to be first to arrive at the place of rendezvous, and was engaged in glancing over the leaves of a book, when the prince suddenly entered the apartment. In his hurry to show the respect due to royalty, Bolingbroke's foot slipped, and, had not the prince held out his hand to support him, he would have fallen to the ground. "My lord," was the prince's happy observation, "I trust this may be an omen of my succeeding in raising your fortunes."

On the death of his father, in 1742, Bolingbroke, having become possessed of the family estates, hastened to take up his residence at the ancient seat of the St. Johns at Battersea. Here, with the exception of two short visits to the Continent, he spent the remainder of his eventful life. Henceforward, as far as professions and appearances can be trusted, we find him in reality wedded to a life of seclusion, and conscientiously

acting up to, and benefiting by, those precepts of philosophy, the consolations of which he had hitherto only professed to feel.

More real afflictions than a mere exclusion from political power were gathering fast around the declining statesman, and it required all his boasted fortitude to sustain him against their attacks. His health had latterly become sadly shattered; he suffered the most excruciating agonies from repeated attacks of rheumatism; and in addition to these bodily infirmities, he had the misfortune to see the friends of his youth — those gifted minds with whom he had mingled in social intercourse for so many years — hurried off, one by one, to the grave. Pope, Swift, Prior, Gay, Atterbury, and Wyndham were no more, and the once envied Bolingbroke found himself sick and almost alone amidst a strange generation; bewailing, in his solitude, the loss of old friends, without the power or, perhaps, the inclination of acquiring new. Nevertheless, the solitude of Battersea was a splendid one; his society was as much courted in the decline of life as it had been at its outset, and the few whom he admitted to the circle of his acquaintance comprised the most distinguished individuals of the age.

Among those with whom, at the close of life, Lord Bolingbroke formed an intimacy, was the celebrated Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, from whose pen we possess more than one inter-

esting notice of the illustrious recluse. The latter writes to his son in the month of November, 1749: "Lord Bolingbroke joins to the deepest erudition the most elegant politeness and good breeding that ever any courtier or man of the world was adorned with. Pope very justly calls him the 'all-accomplished St. John,' with regard to his knowledge and his manners. He had, it is true, his faults, which proceeded from unbounded ambition and impetuous passions; but they have now subsided by age and experience; and I can wish you nothing better than to be what he is now, without being what he has been formerly." Again Lord Chesterfield writes to his son on the 12th of December following: "Lord Bolingbroke has both a tongue and a pen to persuade; his manner of speaking in private conversation is full as elegant as his writings; whatever subject he either speaks or writes upon, he adorns it with the most splendid eloquence; not a studied or laboured eloquence, but such a flowing happiness of diction, which (from care, perhaps, at first) is become so habitual to him, that even his most familiar conversations, if taken down in writing, would bear the press, without the least correction either as to method or style. If his conduct in the former part of his life had been equal to all his natural and acquired talents, he would most justly have merited the epithet of 'all-accomplished.' He is himself sensible of his past errors; those violent

passions which seduced him in his youth have now subsided by age; and take him as he is now, the character of 'all-accomplished' is more his due than any man's I ever knew in my life." Such is the light in which Lord Chesterfield places the character of Bolingbroke at the close of his memorable career. Lord Chesterfield was too acute an observer of human nature to be deceived by mere empty professions of philosophical content, and, moreover, as these flattering eulogiums were never intended to meet the public eye, the truth of the picture may confidently be relied upon.

But the misfortune which seems to have principally weighed on the spirits of Bolingbroke was the declining health of his lady; a calamity which apparently affected him far more deeply than any sufferings of his own. For many years her existence had been a precarious one, but now, broken down by repeated attacks of indisposition, it was evident that the catastrophe so long dreaded by her husband was at hand. The affection with which Bolingbroke never failed to regard his second wife, and the tender solicitude with which he watched over her sufferings, cannot but be regarded as redeeming traits in his character. To the Earl of Marchmont he writes from London, in February, 1750, about a month before his wife's decease: "It is true that I have been these two months in this town much out of order my-

self, and yet not on my own account, but on that of a poor woman who is come, I think, to die here. It is impossible to describe the torment she has endured these many months, and the weakness to which she is reduced by a slow but almost continued fever at this time. A man who thinks and feels as I do can find no satisfaction in the present scene; and I am about to lose one who is the comfort of my life in all the melancholy scenes of it, just at a time when the present is most likely to continue and to grow daily worse."[1] Lady Bolingbroke died on the 18th of March, 1750, and was buried in the vault of the St. Johns at Battersea, where a tribute paid by her husband to her many virtues may still be seen within the walls of the church.

Bolingbroke, in addition to other bodily ail-

[1] Horace Walpole, who detested the very name of Bolingbroke, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, dated April 2, 1750, thus heartlessly refers to Bolingbroke's bereavement: "My Lord Bolingbroke has lost his wife. When she was dying he acted grief; flung himself upon her bed and asked her if she could forgive him." This passage is strongly characteristic of the cold heart and envenomed pen of Horace Walpole; for that the grief of Bolingbroke was sincere, there can be no question. Walpole, however, at the same time that he stigmatises the husband, records a pleasing anecdote of the wife: "I never saw her, but have heard her wit and parts excessively commended. Doctor Middleton told me a compliment she made him two years ago, which I thought pretty. She said she was persuaded that he was a very great writer, for she understood his works better than any other English book, and that she had observed that the best writers were always the most intelligible."

ments, had recently been attacked by a new and formidable disorder, a cancerous humour in his face. Like his enemy, Walpole, who died by a disorder almost as terrible, he had called in an ignorant empiric to his aid, and it is remarkable that in the cases of both these eminent statesmen, the improper remedies to which they were subjected hastened their ends. Lord Chesterfield writes, about this period, to a lady in Paris: "I frequently see our friend Bolingbroke, but I see him with great concern. A humour he has long had in his cheek proves to be cancerous, and has made an alarming progress of late. Hitherto, it is not attended with pain, which is all he wishes, for as to the rest he is resigned. Truly a mind like his, so far superior to the generality, would have well deserved that nature should have made an effort in his favour as to the body, and given him an uncommon share of health and duration."

The excruciating agonies to which he was subsequently subjected are said to have been endured by him with the most admirable calmness and resignation. "God who placed me here," he said to Lord Chesterfield, "will do what he pleases with me hereafter, and he knows best what to do; may he bless you!" Finding that his disorder was making rapid progress, he expressed a wish to draw his last breath at Battersea, where he was removed a short time before his dissolution. To the end he adhered to those principles which

he had unfortunately advocated through life, giving orders that none of the clergy should be admitted to him in his last moments. Lord Chesterfield, after observing that the remedies to which he was subjected hastened his end, touches slightly on the closing scenes of his friend's life. "What I most lament," he says, "is that the medicines put him to exquisite pain, — an evil I dread much more than death, both for my friends and myself. I lose a warm, an amiable, and instructive friend. I saw him a fortnight before his death, when he depended upon a cure, and so did I; and he desired I would not come any more till he was quite well, which he expected would be in ten or twelve days. The next day the great pains came on, and never left him till within two days of his death, during which he lay insensible. What a man! What extensive knowledge! What eloquence! His passions, which were strong, were injurious to the delicacy of his sentiments; they were apt to be confounded together, and often wilfully. The world will do him more justice now than in his lifetime."

Bolingbroke expired at his seat at Battersea[1] on

[1] The residence of Bolingbroke at Battersea, part of which is still standing, is perhaps the most classical spot in the neighbourhood of London, and, in any other country, would be regarded as an object of interest and respect. It was long the manorial residence of the ancient family of the St. Johns; it was frequented, in the reign of Queen Anne, by the celebrated statesmen and poets of that period; in one of the rooms Pope wrote his "Essay on Man," and in another Bolingbroke expired. The

the 12th of December, 1751, in his seventy-fourth year. He was interred by the side of his second wife, in Battersea Church, where a monument, with an inscription, was sometime afterward erected to his memory. The original draft of the epitaph, in his own handwriting, is still preserved in the British Museum.

Of the character of Lord Bolingbroke, a better insight may be obtained by a review of his actions, and a perusal of his writings, than if volumes were written on the subject. The very mention of his name by his contemporaries is usually accompanied either by exulting panegyric or the most violent abuse; nor would it be easy to decide whether he was most deservedly admired by his friends or disliked by his enemies. As a specimen of the enthusiasm which his genius, his social suavity, and the magic of his conversation excited in his own immediate circle, we may transcribe the character drawn of him by Lord Orrery. "Lord Bolingbroke," he says, "had early made himself master of men and books; but in his first career of life, being immersed at once in business and pleasure, he ran through a variety of scenes in a surprising and eccentric manner. When his passions subsided by years and disappointment, and when he had improved his rational faculties

author recently attempted to visit a house consecrated by so many interesting associations, but he had the misfortune to be refused admittance by the owner.

by more grave studies and reflection, he shone out in his retirement with a lustre peculiar to himself, though not seen by vulgar eyes. The gay statesman was changed into a philosopher, equal to any of the sages of antiquity. The wisdom of Socrates, the dignity and ease of Pliny, and the wit of Horace, appeared in all his writings and conversation."

Such is the character drawn of Lord Bolingbroke, by one of his most intimate friends; while on the other hand, his enemies have delighted to deface so attractive a portrait, and have frequently substituted an odious representation of their own. Between eulogium on one side, and execration on the other, it becomes somewhat difficult to arrive at the truth. Moreover, posterity still views the likeness through the distorted medium of party feeling, and it will probably continue to depend on the particular opinions of the individual, whether Bolingbroke be regarded as most censurable for his faults or admirable for his virtues.

Nevertheless, the character of Bolingbroke must be allowed, on all hands, to have been of unusual power and brilliancy. "His address," says Lord Chesterfield, "preëngages, his eloquence persuades, and his knowledge informs all who approach him;" and the same writer elsewhere observes: "Bolingbroke talked all day long, as elegantly as he wrote." Swift eulogises his "vast range of wit and fancy;" Pope styles

him "the best writer of the age;" and Parr speaks of "hanging with rapture over the gorgeous declamation of Bolingbroke." As a statesman, his talents were of the first order, and as an orator, he presents the most shining figure in the forensic gallery of our country. Swift speaks of his "invincible eloquence;" Burnet, prejudiced as he was against Bolingbroke, admits his oratorical powers to have been almost superhuman; and Pitt, in a circle of friends, observed that he would sooner recover a speech of Bolingbroke than the missing books of Livy, or any other literary treasure which has been lost to the world. His political writings are of the same high order. They will probably continue to be read for their force of argument, their perspicuity, and the extreme elegance of their diction, as long as the English language shall remain a written tongue.

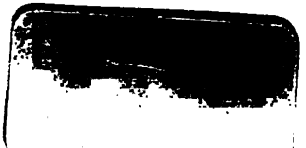
On the merits of Bolingbroke as a philosophical writer, and on his peculiar tenets in regard to revealed religion, it is neither our province nor our desire to dwell. Those writings and those tenets, which were formerly inveighed against by the clergy from the pulpit, and denounced by a jury in a court of justice as a nuisance, have now fortunately sunk into the oblivion they deserve. Putting aside every higher consideration, the mere attempt to undermine a creed on which the hope and happiness of thousands are fixed is an act the most cruel and unjustifiable that can be conceived.

We ourselves, indeed, have just as little right to judge Bolingbroke for his peculiar opinions, as Bolingbroke had a right to force them on others. Neither the pure life of Hume, the gratitude which we owe to the illustrious Gibbon, nor the brilliant philosophy of Bolingbroke, — true and conscientious as may have been their disbelief, — can exempt them from the charge of cruelty toward their fellows; while, at the same time, they derived no advantages to themselves.

Bolingbroke, by his last will, bequeathed all his "manuscript books, papers, and writings" to David Mallet, whom he selected to be his editor, but who proved singularly incompetent to perform the task. A complete edition of his works, edited by Mallet, came out on the 6th of March, 1764, and it was on this occasion that Doctor Johnson gave vent to his memorable tirade against the infidelity of Bolingbroke: "Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward, — a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward, because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman, to draw the trigger after his death."

The publication of Bolingbroke's works (among which there was considerable matter that had not hitherto seen the light) excited an extraordinary sensation alike in the religious and in the literary world. His memory and his principles were attacked by a host of assailants, and the occasion

gave rise to numerous angry denunciations, from the highest order of literary controversy to the most insignificant lampoons. Many who had trembled at the name of Bolingbroke when alive became the virulent maligners of his memory when he was dead. Among others, the celebrated Garrick exerted himself in the cause of religion, and in a poem which he wrote on the death of Mr. Pelham, who expired on the same day that Mallet's edition made its appearance, we find him thus stigmatising the impiety of Bolingbroke. With this trifle, which is not without the kind of merit at which such productions aim, we will conclude our present memoir:

"The same sad morn to Church and State,
(So for our sins 'twas fixed by fate,)
A double stroke was given;
Black as the whirlwinds of the north,
St. John's fell genius issued forth,
And Pelham fled to heaven."

END OF VOLUME VIII.